

SUBJECTIVE REALITY —

Media Mix and Reorganization in Graphic Design

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Abstract

Graphic design meets a design requirement or serves a design mandate in many scenarios. What role can graphic design play when we focus on social issues? With the evolution of society, numerous social problems tend to be increasingly complicated, involving intercultural communication or sensitive political stances. The design could not solve these social problems directly. But if we consider design as a manner of communication, it conveys controversial social matters to the public more effectively with critical or speculative thinking. The real social situation could be revealed from the disruptive information, that is, design to “raise” the question.

This thesis consists of the following three sections. The first section is **the comprehension of Subjective Reality**. People perceive the shallow reality as a dualism: “true” or “false.” The reality investigated in this study goes further on this basis. In terms of the demonstration of “subjective” and “reality” in different disciplines, subjective cognition constructed people’s perception of the world, which leads to the “reality” with multiple dimensions.

The second part is a further analysis of **the causation of Subjective Reality**. Through investigation, it is found that several divergent realities existed in the same news events on account of different positions of the media. Besides, if we trace back the history of aesthetics, we could recognize that the tendency altered radically from “perfect illusion” to “imperfect reality.” We could also assume that the reality of aesthetic hinges on the different epoch in this regard. Therefore, “Subjective Reality” can be ascribed to diverse stances and different eras.

The third part is the design. In terms of the causation of Subjective Reality, materials related to stances and eras were collected from topical news and contemporary lifestyle. To facilitate the comprehension for spectators, the thesis project is assumed as **a fictional independent publisher Reality Daily**. The project intends to amplify the contradictions of diverse opinions by mixing and reorganizing of multi-media (print media and digital media), such as experimenting with different narrative structures to convey the sense of drama in the incident. The design results are in the form of brand design for *Reality Daily*, editorial design for magazines and newspapers, and web prototypes. As a consequence, the project could arouse deep ponderation and confronting concealed social problems by manifesting multiple layers of reality.

Keywords subjective reality, graphic design, editorial design, news, aesthetics, independent publication

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

The proposition of reality has been discussed among various disciplines, especially those Sociologies and Humanities related ones. The shallow level of reality from the cognition of humans is a dualism known as true or false (reality or illusion). Commonly, reality generates from our shared sense of daily life. It could also be regarded as the **fact** that consists of the objective physical world, that is also called the Objective Reality.

The reality discussed in this study goes further on this basis. In the field of philosophy, literature, documentary, journalism, and graphic design, the topic of **Subjective** and **Reality** was mentioned frequently. The reality connected closely to the social environment, cultural background, living habits, and identity cognition of the individual (or observation subject). Hence, the reality from different perspectives is never a single layer. The reality in our subjective consciousness showing different angles is a metaphor of the famous saying, “*A thousand readers could have a thousand Hamlets in their hearts.*” In conclusion, it is the subjective consciousness that leads to multiple dimensions of Subjective Reality.

Subjective Reality is much related to the **current social environment**. For instance, journalists from different publishers could hold different opinions towards the same piece of news. It's hard to judge the authenticity of different viewpoints. If we

INTRODUCTION

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The oil painting showed what the owner was already enjoying among his possessions and his way of life. It enhanced his own view of himself as he already was. It began with facts, the facts of his life.

– John Berger, 1972

1

Berger, J. (1972) *Ways of Seeing. Episode 04* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jTUebm73lY>

stand in their position, the journalists emphasize on different angles of the same issue and magnify the perspectives they already hold, the following is what John Berger said in the documentary *Ways of Seeing*¹.

Another example is the **aesthetic** changing according to different eras. We could observe the same logic pattern from the news reports, that is, the **reality** and **illusion** correspond to **beauty** and **ugliness**. There is no boundary between beauty and ugliness in art or fashion. It is the preference for the choice of different eras that prompt changeable aesthetics. And the causation of the changeable aesthetic is precisely the development of our social environment through times.

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Designers have technical tools for typography, graphics, illustration, movement and sound. Those tools afford the opportunity to construct information environments and to begin to author content related to complex contexts and sociological issues. This gives designers opportunities to bite-off projects of larger scope and greater social relevance.

– Jorge Frascara, 2008

2

Frascara, J. (2008). Jorge Frascara and Dietmar Winkler on design research. *Design Research Quarterly*, 3(3), 1-13.

Can graphic design **solve** social issues²? In most usual scenarios, graphic design meets a design requirement or serves a design mandate. What role can graphic design play when we focus on social issues? With the development of society, numerous social problems tend to become increasingly complicated, involving multiple cultural backgrounds and

sensitive political contradictions. The design could not **solve** these social problems directly. But if we reinvent it and consider graphic design as a method of communication, it can convey some controversial social topics to the public with critical or speculative thinking after in-depth analysis. The real social sit-

uation could be revealed from the disruptive information and showed directly to the public. The process can be understood as design to **raise** the question.

The identity of the graphic designer has also tended to diversify in recent years on the grounds that **Design Authorship** is generally recognized. An increasing number of graphic designers are inclined to play the role of the **Author**. They create text, pictures, and products based on their unique personalities, completing the transition from a mere graphic designer to editors, authors, curators, and more roles. The evolution is breaking down people's stereotypes of ordinary graphic designers. The transformation also brings more possibilities for the graphic design itself. Through the grasp of text content, the processing of images, and the overall view of curating, graphic designers gained the power to express their critical attitude and speculative opinion of social issues to the public.

The **purpose** of the thesis project is to raise the questions in the context of social issues with a critical attitude and to implement graphic design techniques as an author. Subjective Reality is the **theme** of the thesis project. And the preferred **method** to present it is the mix and reorganization of graphic design language.

For the comprehension of spectators, the thesis project assumed itself as a fictional independent publisher *Reality Daily*. The publisher presents the conflicts of original images, texts, and videos with a relatively objective manner. While reflecting diverse attitudes in the design process, the exploration of the multi-media (printing media, digital media, etc.) was beneficial.

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For instance, several typography structures were designed and printed out to compare the effectiveness of conveying a sense of dramatic conflict in specific content.

The **vision** of this study is to lead people to observe objectively and understand current social issues from multiple perspectives. As a consequence, by curating the work as an exhibition, the project could confront concealed social problems and contribute to some active reflections on society by manifesting multiple layers of reality.

1.2 Literature Review

The discussion about reality in philosophy, psychology, journalism, literature, and many other fields are valuable references to this research.

*Subjective idealism*³ from a philosophical perspective implied that personal feelings and opinions are the pillars of the existence of the world. A further interpretation is that reality comes from an individual's subjective consciousness.

There is a phrase in psychology called *Confirmation Bias*⁴. It means that people tend to believe and approve the arguments that already existed within their cognitive sphere, and ignore ideas that appear contrary to their decision intentionally.

*The stream of consciousness*⁵ is a writing genre in literature. This narrative technique does not use the conventional sequential logic while describing the plot. Instead, it applies the flow of subjective consciousness as the main clue of writing, which permits the imagination beyond the constraints of objective reality for the reader.

In the category of sociology and journalism, according to the construction of social reality theory, society is divided into *objective reality*, *symbolic reality*, and *subjective reality*.⁶ Moreover, subjective reality means that individuals have various subjective understandings and cognitions to the news and information they access from public media.

These discussions over different disciplines has the commonality, which is using subjective consciousness to interpret objective reality. In accordance with the review of the theoretical

3

Bristow, W. (2002). Are Kant's Categories Subjective? *The Review of Meta-physics*, 551-580.

4

Jonas, E., Schulz-Hardt, S., Frey, D., & Thelen, N. (2001). Confirmation bias in sequential information search after preliminary decisions: an expansion of dissonance theoretical research on selective exposure to information. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 80(4), 557.

5

Humphrey, R. (1958). *Stream of consciousness in the modern novel*. Univ of California Press. P1-2

6

Adoni, H., & Mane, S. (1984). Media And The Social Construction Of Reality. *Communication Research*, 11(3), 323-340. doi:10.1177/009365084011003001

background, this paper refined the title of the thesis as **Subjective Reality**.

Reality is not isolated or immutable. What made it changeable is the difference between individuals' perspectives. For instance, authors with different mindsets constructed their own subjective world of the stream of consciousness in the work of literature. For a news report, journalists would present different perspectives towards the same issue as a way of implying the subjective reality from the position of varying publishing media. And graphic designers could also communicate their subjective perceptions of the society to the audience through their posters or books. Therefore, reality is multi-dimensional.

Similar to the term **author** in literature or journalism, there is another concept, **Design Authorship**, in graphic design. The graphic designer's behavior of expressing the independent opinion and underlining reality through personal experience embodies his or her authorship. An early exploration of the Design Authorship is an interpretation by Michael Rock in 1996. He mentioned in the article *Design as Author* that the original definition of the term **Author** was not directly associated with the work of literature. It referred to the person who created or gave birth to something. For this reason, he regarded inventors, builders, architects, and directors as Author as well.³

Reality could cover almost all aspects of social matters and our lifestyle. The dispute between **truth** and **fake** in news reports demonstrates one aspect of reality, and the distinction between **beauty** and **ugliness** is another aspect of reality. Tracing

back the history of graphic design, we could notice a series of cusps between “beauty” and “ugly.”

The graphic design of the 50s and 60s formulated rational and universal aesthetic standards of design, which are the most effective for the public visual environment. Therefore, the geometric shapes, sans-serif typefaces, and the grid system were widely circulated and regarded as the criterion of aesthetics.

In the early 1990s, American art critic Steven Heller criticized the “ugly” experimental typography designed by students from Cranbrook College of Art. And he added, the appearance of “ugly design” was so disruptive that the existing criterion was disregarded.⁸

The situation changed rapidly during the 20th century. The Brutalist Web Design and New Ugly style stand at the opposite side of the conventional design. Just like their names, the new design trends subverted the traditional “beautiful” design style, and communicate the identity and subjective consciousness of the designers in a bolder, disorderly, and chaotic manner.

The leading fashion has changed from following the conventional “beautiful” design to the “ugly” design style. Since then, Graphic designers have increasingly promoted personalized expressions in their works, using “ugly” design to break the conventional design principles and express the designer’s subjective viewpoints towards the reality.

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Heller, S. (1993). Cult of the Ugly, *Eye* no. 9 vol. 3. Retrieved from <http://eyemagazine.com/feature/article/cult-of-the-ugly>

1.3 Research questions and structure

Chapters 1 to 3 of the thesis belong to theory and research, and chapters 4 to 6 are based on the conclusions of the analysis to carry out the design practice. In order to grasp the structure and logic of the thesis, this thesis guides the theory and research parts of the first three chapters with three research questions. (see next page)

- What is “subjective reality”?
- What makes “reality” subjective? (Or, why is the reality vague under different situations?)
- How to demonstrate “subjective reality” in the field of graphic design?

In order to answer the first question, sections 1 to 4 of Chapter 2, analyzed the interpretation of “subjective reality” in four disciplines and the classification of reality in social construction theory. Chapter 2 Section 5 focused on how the subjective reality manifests itself in the language of graphic design, which is also related to the third research question.

And Chapter 3 mainly investigated the causation of the subjective reality, which responded to the second question. The causations were explained through two aspects: different positions (analyzed the examples of news events) and different eras (analyzed the aesthetic revolution as an example).

Chapter 4 is the Design Concept and Materials. Based on the causation of “subjective reality” analyzed in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 provided the design concept and collected the de-

sign materials which corresponded with the two aspects of the causation.

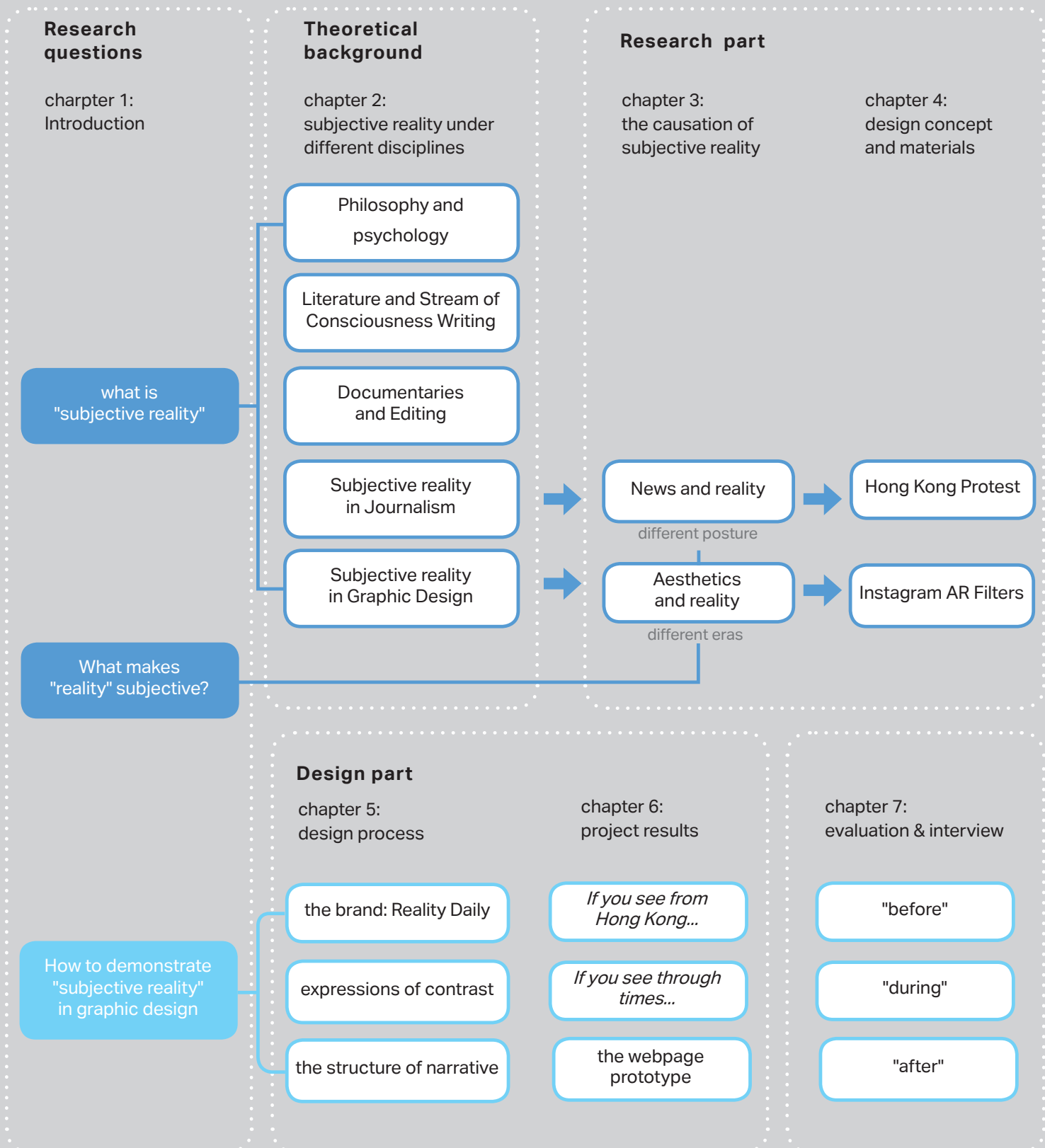
The first aspect: positions of the news media, was interpreted by the 2019 Hong Kong protests. Chapter 4.2.1 briefly introduced the origin of the protest, the key timelines during the protest, the differences between the news report from mainland China and from foreign news publishers. The viewpoints of multiple parties were also enumerated in the chapter.

Another aspect: the change of times, was illustrated by the popular AR filters on Instagram. Chapter 4.2.2 regarded AR filters as a testimony to the revolution of mass aesthetics. Besides, the visual features of AR filters and the collaboration between fashion brands and AR artists were demonstrated at the same time.

Chapter 5 revealed the design process in detail. The first part is the exploration of the medium, attempting to create contradictions by four design practices (color contrast, text contrast, picture contrast, and self-created contrast). The second part is the experimental procedure of three narrative structures of typography (multi-line parallel, two-line parallel, and flipping-over parallel).

Chapter 6 clarified the actual outcomes of the publication design and web design to integrate the two publications as a whole, including simple usability assessments on the reading experiences, the curation for the final exhibition, and the subsequent working plan for the thesis work.

INTRODUCTION



theoretical part

design part

SUBJECTIVE REALITY UNDER DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES

What is subjective reality? There is no specific theory in the field of graphic design to explain this concept. But relevant evidence from other disciplines was found in order to respond to this question. And the exploration of the phrase proceeds from the exterior to the interior, from abstract to concrete and from general to specific.

2.1 The subjective reality in Philosophy and Psychology

Philosophy

The term “**subjective**” comes from Subjective Idealism in the field of philosophy. Idealism and Materialism are the dualism in philosophy, and they belong to two major ideological factions.

The Idealism is generally divided into **Subjective Idealism** and **Objective Idealism**. In agreement with Bristow’s study of Idealism (2002), Subjective Idealism was originally developed by Hegel’s interpretation of Kant’s subjective philosophy.⁹ It emphasizes people’s experiences, feelings, awareness, and believes that these are the foundations of comprising the world. According to Sedgwick (1988), “*(The subjective idealism) is broadening the gap between our subjective comprehension of the world and the world*

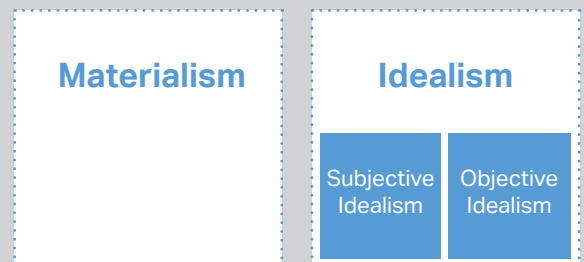


Figure 2.1: illustration for the relationship between Idealism and Subjective Idealism

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Bristow, W. (2002). Are Kant’s Categories Subjective? *The Review of Meta-physics*, 551-580.

10

Sedgwick, S. S. (1988). Hegel's critique of the subjective idealism of Kant's Ethics. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 26(1), 89-105.

11

Ameriks, K. (Ed.). (2017). *The Cambridge companion to German idealism*. Cambridge University Press. pp33.

itself”,¹⁰ the subjective comprehension mentioned here is based on the physical world; it also proved that there is a difference between subjective reality and the objective reality of the world. For human beings, “*The subjective and ideal is the internalization of living force, while the objective and the real is the externalization of living force*”¹¹(Frederick, 2017, p33). Thus, it is the depth of people’s internal subjective consciousness and thought that formed the external objective reality of the world’s dimensions.

The theory of subjective idealism in the field of philosophy is an abstract concept, but it is equivalent to an anchor point, positioning “subjective consciousness” to the construction of the real world. If we consider the relationship between subjective consciousness and the real world with abstract semantics as the starting point, we will find that subjective consciousness originates from individuals, and an individual’s subjective consciousness is similar to their DNA, each has a unique code of life.

Psychology

In addition to the subjective theory in the field of philosophy, individual subjective consciousness is correlated with psychological factors. As the definition of Confirmation Bias claimed by Jonas (2001), the selection of information in decision-making often coexists with systematic bias. The choice is influenced by the innate attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of the individual so that people can not make the correct decision rationally.¹² In other words, people tend to believe and accept the assertion that matches their subjective cognition but ignores the doubtlessly accurate information. The theory shows how subjective consciousness affects the judgment of people.

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Jonas, E., Schulz-Hardt, S., Frey, D., & Thelen, N. (2001). Confirmation bias in sequential information search after preliminary decisions: an expansion of dissonance theoretical research on selective exposure to information. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 80(4), 557.

The psychological proposition of subjective cognition can be further interpreted in many aspects. For instance, it is a mirror that reflects the public psychology of perception. Society consists of the masses of individuals. Thus, the Confirmation Bias not only occurs in individual incidents but also in **social cognitions**. As stated by Shi (1989, p12), “*Social cognition is the process that individuals observe and judge the psychological state and behavioral motivations of others... The process of social cognition is based on the life experiences and the analysis of relevant indications of the observers.*”¹³ The study in social cognition indicates that social confirmation bias is derived from individual experience and subjective comprehension (Figure 2.2).

Furthermore, subjective cognition and the social environment dominates the **aesthetic preference**. According to Jacobson’s study (2005) about the psychology of aesthetics,¹⁴ the theoretical inventory developed from cognitive psychology is significantly supportive of the research into the psychology of aesthetics. To illustrate, the author further demonstrated that the visual perception of Gestalt psychology contributed to art and aesthetics. We could obtain relevant evidence also in Noguchi’s research, which underlined that the aesthetic feeling doesn’t exist on its own, but is “*an outcome of the self-environment interaction which can be regarded as Gestalt qualities like physiognomic characters.*”¹⁵ (Noguchi, 2003) The interaction between aesthetics and its exterior environment implied that the aesthetic preference determined by both internal subjective cognition and external social environment.

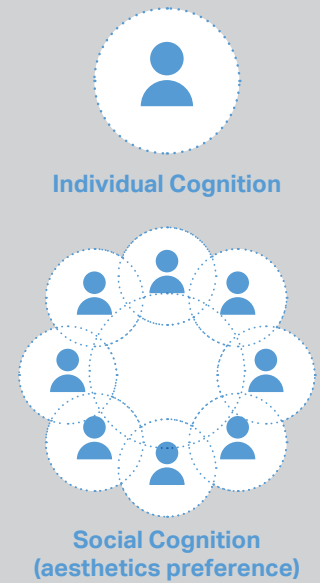


Figure 2.2: illustration for the Social Cognition and aesthetic preference

13

Shi, R.H. (1989). *Xiandai shehui xinlixue* [Psychology of Modern Society] Shanghai: Huadong shifan chubanshe. P12

14

Jacobsen, T. (2006). Bridging the Arts and Sciences: A Framework for the Psychology of Aesthetics. *Leonardo*, 39(2), 155–162. doi: 10.1162/leon.2006.39.2.155

15

Noguchi, K. (2003). The relationship between visual illusion and aesthetic preference—an attempt to unify experimental phenomenology and empirical aesthetics. *Axiomathes*, 13(3-4), 261-281.

2.2 The subjective reality in Literature

What is stream-of-consciousness writing? It is a narrative genre or a writing technique mostly used in fiction. The term originates from psychology, as a consequence, emphasizes the human consciousness and utilizes it as the stream of the narrative. Both “stream” and “consciousness” are abstract and gives the spectators a sense of the unsteady, Humphrey (1958, p1-2) further noted that the “subjectivity” is the fundamental factor to differentiate the stream-of-consciousness novel from the other narrative genres.¹⁶

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Humphrey, R. (1958). *Stream of consciousness in the modern novel*. Univ of California Press. P1-2

To a certain extent, the subjectivity of the author constructed the reality for readers through the technique of stream-of-consciousness writing. Humphrey (1958, p21-22) perused the works from Virginia Woolf, Joyce, and Faulkner, who were considered the representative of stream-of-consciousness writing, and he summarized that the three writers strengthened the subjective consciousness from their perspectives and assembled the “reality” for the reader in fictions.¹⁷

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Humphrey, R. (1958). *Stream of consciousness in the modern novel*. Univ of California Press. P21-22

The subjective preference from the writers establishes their historical background and life experiences. Stream-of-consciousness writing always counts as an expression of subjective reality. Subjective reality originates from life experience, and life experience is also an important role in the stream of consciousness writing. In a relevant study, the experience is one of the components of stream-of-consciousness writing. Dainton (2006, p21) mentioned in the book *Stream of Consciousness: The Unity and Continuity of Conscious Experience* that from the perspective

of Moderate Naturalism, the experience itself is an inherent component of reality, not the mere superficial appearance of the reality.¹⁸ The reality appears differently due to the distinctions of the experience among individuals.

We could observe the example of how the subjective reality is presented by stream-of-consciousness writing back to the 1920s. Virginia Woolf, as mentioned before, is a famous British novelist in the early 20th century and a representative of stream-of-consciousness writing. The sentences from her early oeuvre indicated her perspective on reality and her roaming sentiments.¹⁹

The sentence without rational narrative logic implied that reality varies with the changes in the environment of the times and the perspectives of observers.

Wang's study (2018) supports the argument. She determined that in Virginia Woolf's early practice of stream-of-consciousness *The Mark on the Wall*, the author created the narrative logicality depending on her psychological consciousness and highlighted her subjective reality.²⁰ The Stream of Consciousness in the field of literature can count as a practice of using writing as a method to represent the reality from the writer's own consciousness and perspective.

18

Dainton, B. (2006). *Stream of consciousness: Unity and continuity in conscious experience*. Taylor & Francis. P21.

“

What is meant by 'reality'? It would seem to be something very erratic, very undependable—now to be found in a dusty road, a scrap of newspaper in the street, a daffodil in the sun. It lights up a group in a room and stamps some casual saying. It overwhelms one walking home beneath the stars and makes the silent world more real than the world of speech...”

– Virginia Woolf, *The Mark on the Wall*, 1929

19

Woolf, V. (1929). *A Room of One's Own*. P91-92 Retrieved from <http://www.feedbooks.com/book/6655/a-room-of-one-s-own>

20

Wang, H.Y. (2018). A Picture of "Subjective Reality": A Narrative Analysis of Virginia Woolf's "The Mark on the Wall." *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, 8(3), 384-388.

2.3 The subjective reality in Documentaries

Xie (2016) expounded the “subjective reality” in the documentary from the perspective of subjective cognition and subjective manifestation. He claimed that the narrative perspective of documentary films comes from the personal experiences and comprehension of society by the director. Furthermore, the peculiar shooting and editing in a documentary become a symbol of the director’s subjective understanding.²¹ In the practice of documentary filming, the way to shoot characters, and the arrangement of narrative structure are under the director’s control. Hence, the film editing techniques such as montage embody a subjective explanation of the objective reality in documentaries.

21

Xie, L.H. (2016). Jilupian zhenshi jilu yu zhuguan biaoda guanxi tansuo [The relationship between the real record of documentary and the subjective expression]. *Fujian shangye gaodeng zhuanke xuexiao xuebao*, 90-94.

22

Xu Bing. *Dragonfly Eyes* (Trailer) [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0fedg-Skns>



Figure 2.3: the poster of *Dragonfly Eyes*

“*Dragonfly has 28,000 eyes, blinking 40,000 times per second. Hour by hour, checking, deleting, searching, identifying.*”²² This is the narration of the mechanical voice in the trailer for *Dragonfly Eyes* (Figure 2.3). The experimental artistic documentary was published in 2017, and the director Xu Bing is a professor of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in China. As the title of the film, the “dragonfly” is a metaphor for all-pervasive surveillance by cameras in contemporary society. The cameras are identifying people’s faces and every single movement or gesture that belongs to their life experiences. And these images appear on the internet and might be shown on someone’s screen. If the real world that people are familiar with is smashed into

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pieces and reorganized as different stories, could they recognize whether it is actual or fictional?

Editing and rearranging are the manifestation of subjective reality in documentaries and films. By clipping the original video materials into separate pieces, the sequential logic of storytelling is diverse. There are no “actors” or “camera crew” in the 81-minute experimental film. The original video footage consists of fragments from public surveillance devices, including highway speed monitors and a variety of downloadable video clips on the website such as airplane crashes and even webcasts. (Figure 2.4) These irrelevant video materials formed a logical narrative stream by ingenious editing and post-dubbing. It tells the story of the protagonist “Qing Ting” (which means the dragonfly in Chinese) and her bumpy life. In this regard, people esteem Xu Bing more as a designer or editor instead of the director of the film.

In the film, the protagonist, “Qing Ting,” has undergone several plastic surgeries and has worked as a live streamer. As explained by Xu²³, “Qing Ting” in the film frequently changes her appearance for the reason that it is not the same person in separate video materials. The audience could confront the potential social problems that Xu Bing desired to reflect on from the behaviors of the young generation. The innovative film ex-



Figure 2.4: the screenshots from trailer of *Dragonfly Eyes*

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Xu Bing. *Dragonfly Eyes (Trailer)* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0fedg-Skns>

DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES

poses the designer Xu's subjective consciousness to the public, which is also his subjective reality.

Another example is the Radical Montage in films produced by Peter Greenaway. The audience can observe different storytelling techniques in these experimental movies. In contrast with conventional films, Peter concentrates on exposing the character's spiritual plane. Therefore, he uses various pioneering shooting techniques on the same screen to reflect the mental activities of different roles simultaneously. (Figure 2.5) These split screens reflect the subjective reality from the perspective of characters.



Figure 2.5: two screenshots from *The Tulse Luper Suitcases* by Peter Greenaway

2.4 The subjective reality in Journalism

On the other hand, the discussion in the scope of journalism and media provides the classification of reality. Regarding the contributor of Modern Journalism, Walter Lippmann (1922, p194), described the “*function of news*” in his book *Public Opinion* as “*a picture of reality*”.²⁴

Based on the definition of news that was generally endorsed in the field, Berger and Luckmann (1967) decomposed the social circumstance into **objective reality** and **subjective reality**, arguing that human beings, as independent individuals, had their own subjective cognition, which composed the diversity of society as well.²⁵ Adoni and Mane (1984) contributed to a more precise classification of social reality. In their theoretical research on the social construction of reality, **the social environment is divided into objective reality, symbolic reality, and subjective reality**.²⁶ Among these, the objective reality can be understood as “facts.” The critics define subjective reality as emotion-based behaviors towards the analysis and judgment of objective reality. In addition, the symbolic reality is highlighted as a means of communication between subjective reality and objective reality.

According to a sound grasp of Adoni and Mane’s research, miscellaneous news reports are the **symbolic reality** that absorbs the materials from **objective reality** and export as news articles with the perspective of a journalist, and the readers generate their **subjective reality** in their mind. In other words,

“

The function of news is to signalize an event, the function of truth is to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them into relation with each other, and make a picture of reality on which men can act.”

– Walter Lippmann, 1922

24

Lippmann, W. (1965). *Public opinion*. 1922. URL: <http://infomotions.com/etexts/gutenberg/dirs/etext04/pbp nn10. htm>.

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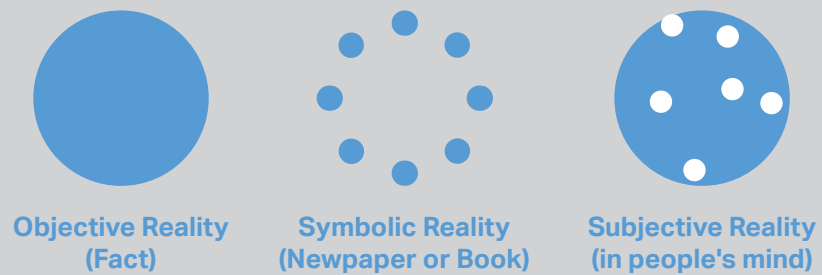
Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The Social Construction of Reality*. Penguin Books.

26

Adoni, H., & Mane, S. (1984). Media And The Social Construction Of Reality. *Communication Research*, 11(3), 323-340. doi:10.1177/009365084011003001

DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES

Figure 2.6: The illustration for different kinds of Reality



journalists or news reporters, as communicators, attaching their own opinions to the original information, and then the news report they write becomes a reality that indicates their subjective perceptions. And different news media naturally stand in various factions. When commenting on the same international news events, the positions and political preferences of domestic news media and international news media appear to be distinguishing.

The tendency of international news often leads to deviations in public opinion. A certain number of Chinese citizens hold the assumption that foreign media tend to make negative judgments on Chinese issues. What if we convert our position and observe from the data objectively?

The GDELT project is a public news database supported by Google Jigsaw. It monitors and collects news events in more than 100 languages and media channels from various countries all over the world and extracts critical information such as subject matter, people involved, corporations, geographic location, and time of occurrence for an analysis purpose. GDELT marks the Sentiment Index for each article in different countries. A negative number of the index for a news report indicates the negative reviews towards the country and vice versa.

The data (Figure 2.7) collected by a Zhihu user (a Chinese knowledge sharing website) Lightwing Lee can illustrate the situation.²⁷ From the figure, we can detect that the Sentiment Index from Britain and America towards China are positive numbers (0.307 and 1.335), which means the positive report towards China is in the majority. In contrast, the coverage from domestic China towards America and Britain are both negative (-2.091 and -0.859), and the rating for America reaches even twice that for Britain. By comparing these data, it is evident that news articles from domestic China incline to be negative towards Britain and America.

This data proves the inaccuracy of the belief that Chinese residents consider the foreign press reporting pessimistically towards China. Consequently, it is tendentious reports published by domestic media that have misled public opinion.

27

Li, Y.R. (2017, March 6) Ni zenme kandai guowai meiti rezhong yu baodao Zhongguo fujian xinwen de shi? [What do you think of foreign media keen to report negative news in China?]. Retrieved from <https://www.zhihu.com/people/pjhuang>

America		Britain		China	
Towards:	Sentiment Index	Towards:	Sentiment Index	Towards:	Sentiment Index
America	-0.876	Britain	-0.365	China	1.222
Britain	0.581	America	0.127	America	-2.091
China	0.307	China	1.335	Britain	-0.895
Russia	-1.901	France	-1.089	Japan	-2.527
Canada	0.939	Ireland	0.343	Pakistan	0.857

Figure 2.7: the illustration remade from the Sentiment Index

2.5 The subjective reality in Graphic Design

As was mentioned in the previous section, news reports can be regarded as “symbolic reality,” and it is a means of communication between the objective reality and the spectators. If the form of communication transfers from text to images, the “symbolic reality” can be amplified to the scope of visual manifestation in graphic design. Similar to the news, graphic design work can be considered as a “symbol” of the reality as well. For instance, when designing a poster with the same theme, there will be multiple outcomes depending on the personalities of alternative designers and the implementation of the techniques. The design speaks for the designer in all cases. As a consequence, the design conveys the designer’s subjective manner of observing society.

“Perspective makes the single eye the center of the visible world.”

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Berger, J. (1990). *Ways of seeing: Based on the BBC Television Series*. Penguin Books.

²⁸ (p.16-17) As Berger (1990) claimed, art and aesthetics, we see today distinguished from the conventional perspectives. He provided two representative examples for comparison, the oil painting, and the color photography. The resemblance between the two mechanisms is that both of them are illustrating the reality (especially the real social statement) in the era they are prevailing. Oil painting corresponded with the condition and possessions owned by patricians, while color photography in commercial advertisements is congruous with the contemporary (or fashion) manner of living, which is desired by the majority. On the other hand, the sense of contents communicated through the two media reveals inconsistent aesthetic preferences. Phras-

es such as restrained, classic, elegant, and artistic are the subjective cognition in oil painting, while bold, modern, fashion, and commercial represent the subjective consciousness in color photography. These are the subjective sensations deep in human consciousness.

To summarize, it is both the current status of life of the era which people lived in and the subjective sensations that principally manipulate their aesthetic preference.

Graphic Design in 1950s-1960s

As a discipline closely related to aesthetics, the form and content of graphic design inevitably change with the mass aesthetic attitudes. Graphic design in the 1950s and 1960s was setting rational and universal standards and norms for an active public visual environment. The effective Graphic design was imperatively needed to reconstruct the infrastructure of cities after World War II. To fulfill the purpose of effectiveness and recognition, the most common Graphic Design implements geometric shapes, sans-serif fonts, and grid systems. There were quite a few representative graphic designers in that period of time, such as Josef Müller, Emil Ruder, Paul Rand, and Wim Crouwel.

Josef Müller invented the grid system and led the movement of International Typographic Style (also the Swiss Style); Emil Ruder published the book *Typographie: A Manual for Design*, which was a guideline for sans-serif typefaces; The poster design by Wim Crouwel is also a typical format utilizing the grid system; And people can notice the manifestation of geometric illustrations from Paul Rand's logo design for IBM. (Figure 2.8)

DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES

Figure 2.8.1: *Grid Systems in Graphic Design : A Visual Communication Manual for Graphic Designers, Typographers and Three Dimensional Designers*, Josef Müller-Brockmann, 1961

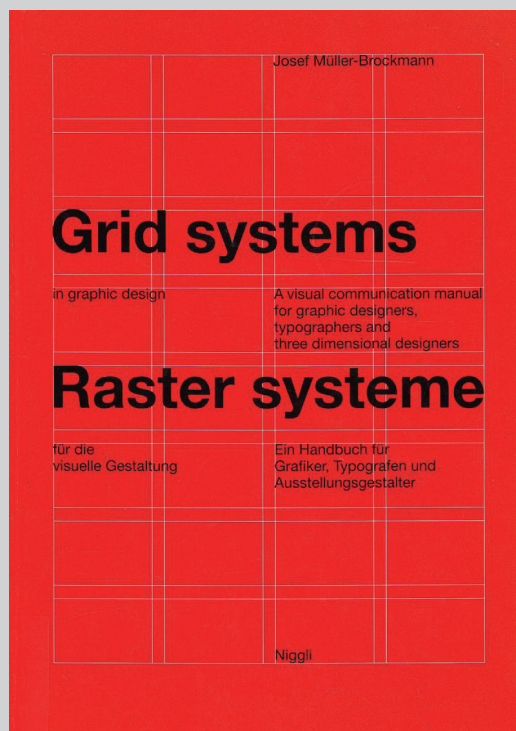


Figure 2.8.2: *Typographie: A Manual for Design*, Emil Ruder, 1967



Figure 2.8.3: Logo designed for IBM, Paul Rand, 1962



Figure 2.8.4: Poster designed for Stedelijk museum, Wim Crouwel, 1957



Ugly Design 1990s

In the early 1990s, together with the phrase “Ugly Design,” a controversy over beauty and ugliness was aroused in the field of graphic design. In 1992, graphic design institutions such as the Cranbrook College of Art and Rhode Island School of Design attempted to practice an experimental visual style that seemed chaotic, confusing (Figure 2.9) and did not conform to the current aesthetic.

Steven Heller, an American art critic, was critical of the “cult” of the ugly design. Heller (1993) outlined that the “Ugly Design” communicated unnecessarily as well as confusing information to its audience.²⁹ Nevertheless, he does consent that beauty has different appearances from diverse visions. Heller believes that “Ugly Design” is never the purpose of pursuing maverick opinions. Designers should not create “ugly” design merely for its “ugliness” but it needs to be justified with motivation and rationality. Though, the approach adopted by those graphic design institutions is admirable to a certain extent. Their perception conveys their “subjective reality” by highlighting the subjective sensations towards “beauty,” and meanwhile, exploring new manifestations of illustration and communication. From examining the findings, aesthetic, as another sort of “reality,” can be subjectively observed by different audiences and designers. The “Ugly Design” is also a prefiguration of the diversified development of graphic design practices.

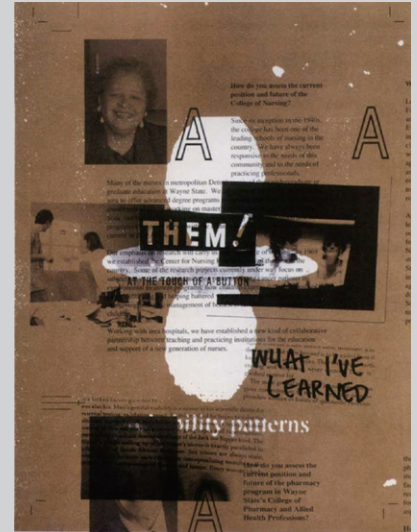


Figure 2.9: the publication design from the Cranbrook College of Art, *Output*, 1992

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Heller, S. (1993). Cult of the Ugly, *Eye* no. 9 vol. 3. Retrieved from <http://eyemagazine.com/feature/article/cult-of-the-ugly>

Web Brutalism 2010s



Figure 2.10: Geisel Library by William Pereira, 1970, SAN DIEGO, CA.

Photo: Ryan Kelehar via Shutterstock

The ugly design plays a vital role in the evolution of graphic design, under the influence of which, a few new terms such as the **Web Brutalism** and the **New Ugly** emerged in the 21st century. As introduced, the conventional graphic design of the 1950s is the implementation of the grid system, the balance

of visual elements, and the efficiency of

the communication. In contrast to it, the Web Brutalism and the New Ugly convey chaotic and disordered visual elements to readers in websites, posters, and exhibitions.

The term “Brutalist” originated from Brutalist architectural design and so-called “Brutalism”. In the 1950s-70s (after World War II), numerous solid concrete buildings without any external decoration emerged all over the world, which, from the perspective of ordinary citizens, were incomplete architectures. There are several typical characteristics of Brutalist buildings, for instance, the geometric outlines, modular framework, and even some pipelines exposed in the open air.³⁰ (Figure 2.10) The reason for its “brutal” appearance is that the functional steel, concrete, and glass of the architecture fulfill the emergent requirement of post-war accommodations.³¹

The Brutalist architecture style has gradually transmitted to the field of design, especially in web design, and its synonym is “ugly” and “chaotic.” In 2014, Pascal Deville, director of the

30

Sroat, H. (2005, April). Brutalism: An Architecture of Exhilaration. In *Paul Rudolph Symposium*.

31

Stewart, J. (2018, December 4). Brutalism: What Is It and Why Is It Making a Comeback? Retrieved from <https://mymodernmet.com/brutalist-architecture/>

Swiss creative consultancy Freundliche Grüsse, established the “Brutalist websites,” (Figure 2.11) which is dedicated to collecting diverse “bold” and “brutal” websites in the sense of visual communication.

Web Brutalism, as Simen Røyseland (2018) describes in *A New Type of Imprint*, is “a non-symmetric layout and intentional breaking of the grid.” And it is noticed that “*Typography is stretched and warped, and Photoshop effects such as Drop Shadow and Bevel & Emboss are again permissible.*”³²

Such techniques of dealing with components of graphic design are fairly different from the classical principles of “beautiful design” to the masses, some are even considered wild and less polished.

In a contrasting vein, Ganci and Ribeiro (2017) argue that the movement of Web Brutalism will probably influence the web design positively since there is the limitation that both aesthetic and web design are inclined to be ubiquitous “templates.”

³³ Imagine if all web designers design websites following universal usability principles, adaptation rules, and color matching, then such a design output can only be a kind of “beauty” without distinction and innovation. The brutal web design stimulates breaking through the conventional mindset and constructing a website based on what the designer is eager to com-

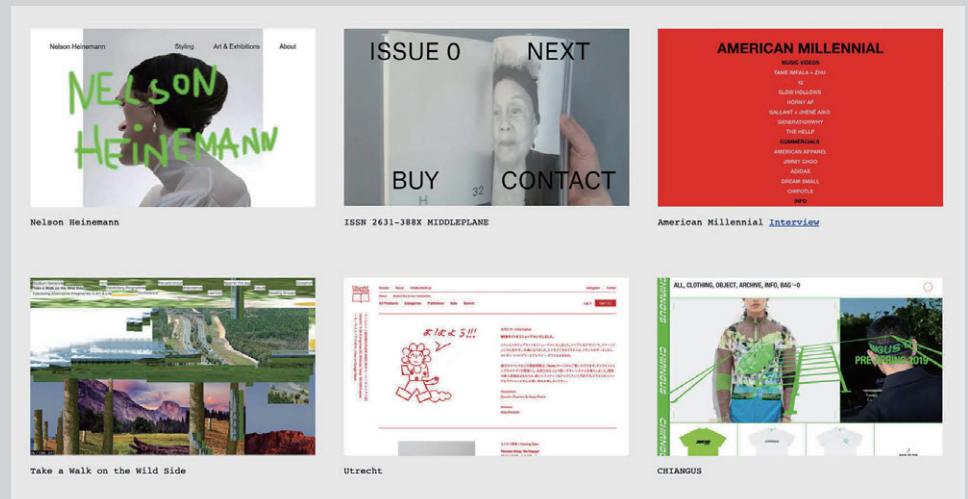


Figure 2.11: Brutalist websites, established by Pascal Deville, 2014

32

Røyseland, S., (2018). *A Callback to The Cult of The Ugly. A New Type of Imprint* vol.12. Retrieved from <https://anti.as/reflections/a-callback-to-the-cult-of-the-ugly>

33

Ganci, A., & Ribeiro, B. (2017). On Web Brutalism and Contemporary Web Design. *Dialectic*, 1(1).

DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES



Figure 2.12:

Above: Palm juice packaging and motorcycle fender

Below: Exhibition by Yui Takada, 2018

municate. Thus, the Web Brutalism is more likely to count as innovative design instead of “ugly” design.

New Ugly 2010s

Similar to the Web Brutalism, the New Ugly aims to explore out of the routine of typical graphic design. Due to the boredom of repeating the well-balanced and ready-to-consume form of conventional graphic design, young designers utilize the New Ugly style to arouse a more frank and authentic attitude.

As a representative of the New Ugly, Japanese designer Yui Takada is an excellent observer who can extract peculiar information from daily life and acquire inspiration from

fragments of images. Following is the poster he created when he came to Shanghai to prepare for his graphic design exhibition. He observed the text on the packaging of the coconut juice, the brand of which is relatively ordinary in Shanghai – black background with red and yellow font, and the fender of motorcycles shuttle through the streets of Shanghai – unique wave-shaped bottom edges with the license plate number in blue and yellow. Inspired by two objects, he combined the color and font with the form of typesetting to design this particular poster. The “juice packaging” and “motorcycle fender” from the perspective of ordinary people have been integrated into an odd poster by the

designer. The pictures (Figure 2.12) indicate the differences of “reality” between the two groups.

As demonstrated in the exhibition foreword written by Zhang (2018), *“The New Ugly represents a frank and straightforward style, the purpose of which is not to abandon the foundation of beauty, but to be aware of the concurrence of both ugliness and beauty.”*³⁴ (Para. 6) Another foremost proponent of the new ugly in Singapore, Darius Ou (2018), suggests that graphic designers should not follow the existing rules blindly, they can have their own personalities and divergent opinions about what and how to communicate.³⁵

With the courage of jumping out of the box, the New Ugly sparks the inclusiveness of aesthetics and embraces designer’s personalities. Thus, there could exist an opportunity for graphic designers to show “subjective reality” from their own perspectives.

34

Zhang, L. (2018, August 16). Dangdai pingmian sheji zhong de shenmei piancha—Yui Takada qianshui pingmian shejizhan qianyan [Aesthetic Bias in Contemporary Graphic Design—Foreword to Graphic Design Exhibition from Yui Takada]. Retrieved from <http://www.ad518.com/article/2018/08/13958>.

35

Zhuang, J. (2018, December 3). Lessons in the “New Ugly” School of Design. Retrieved from <https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/schooled-in-the-new-ugly-lessons-from-darius-ous-autotypography/>

THE CAUSATION OF SUBJECTIVE REALITY

Since “subjective reality” is traceable in different disciplines, what transfers the objective reality to a subjective one? This chapter demonstrates from two perspectives – news events from different positions and aesthetic changes in different eras – to respond to the question.

3.1 News reality from different positions

Diversified information dissemination does make it convenient for people to have access to messages and update them in real-time. Nevertheless, coins always have two sides. There are some examples stated as following: The same newflash could be rumored to multiple versions in a half-day. Readers could notice contradictory viewpoints towards the same piece of news broadcasted from domestic and foreign media. During the presidential election, different parties disseminated positive statements on themselves and then discredited their competitors. The authenticity of the news is ambiguous. While receiving massive information, our human brain has to analyze and infer to distinguish reality and forgery, and sometimes such judgments are difficult. The more “reality” we detect, the more complicated we can tell what “reality” is.

Fake News

The antonym of “reality” in Journalism is “Fake News.” As clarified by Watson (2018), fake news existed as a consequence

36

Watson, C. A. (2018). Information literacy in a fake/false news world: An overview of the characteristics of fake news and its historical development. *International Journal of Legal Information*, 46(2), 93-96.

37

Watson, C. A. (2018). Information literacy in a fake/false news world: An overview of the characteristics of fake news and its historical development. *International Journal of Legal Information*, 46(2), 93-96.

38

Clayton, K., Blair, S., Busam, J. A., Forstner, S., Gance, J., Green, G., ... & Sandhu, M. (2019). Real solutions for fake news? Measuring the effectiveness of general warnings and fact-check tags in reducing belief in false stories on social media. *Political Behavior*, 1-23.

of a financial profit purpose or the fight between hostile parties for electors’ political inclination.³⁶ In 2017, the function of the “Disputed” tag launched on Facebook (Figure 3.1). If users have doubts about the content of a post, they can report to Facebook, and then a third party will be authorized to verify and evaluate the authenticity of the information. The motivation behind the function is that during the 2016 U.S. election campaign, Facebook was criticized for spreading delusive information that misled the political inclination.³⁷ In order to make up the deficiency, Facebook created a function, which reduces the spread of misinformation to a certain extent and promotes the acquirement of authentic information.

However, accompanied by the general use of the “Disputed” tag, people are more likely to be deluded by those posts without the tag. The data from a scientific report by Clayton et al. (2019) proves that after people have been gradually satisfied with detecting the reality by a “Disputed” tag, they readily trust those untagged posts.³⁸ There is a psychological implication that the

misleading headlines are labeled so that the rest of them seems fairly reliable. People reduce their vigilance against fake news and admit the authenticity of the untagged headlines, which is so-called the “Implied Truth”³⁹ in the research of Pennycook et al. (2020).

It is obvious to see the efforts Facebook made as a social media for cracking down on fake news. To trace



Figure 3.1: The warning message that appears when some Facebook users try to post a fake news article. From *The Guardian*, 2017

back the origin of fake news, what causes the expansion of fake news and its ambiguity? Watson (2018) believes that it can be ascribed to two factors: the visual misleadingness of news photographs and the rapid sharing through the internet and social media.⁴⁰ News images are considered the most intuitive material for interpreting the “reality.” However, with the development of various photo editing software technologies, pictures, and even videos could be effortlessly modified and forged. There are two such instances from journals and news events.

A composed “polar bear”

Both of the specimens discuss the impact of images on the “reality” of news events. As a global environmental concern, Climate change and news and research correlate with it, are attracting widespread attention. In the article *Climate Warming and Scientific Integrity* (2010) published by *Science*, readers noticed a photograph in which polar bears crouched on a small lonely ice floe. (Figure 3.2) The article was later criticized for using a composite picture created by Photoshop.⁴¹ Although the editor apologized promptly and replaced the photo with an authentic one, it aroused the detection of reliability of the climate-related images.

As an environmental photojournalist, Braasch (2013) perceived the significance of images for communicating climate protection from the incident. He further proffered that the climate impact is imperceptible to the naked eye, and for that reason, some publications and media platforms have to convey the “visible” climate changes to the public through symbolic and

39

Pennycook, G., Bear, A., Collins, E. T., & Rand, D. G. (2020). The implied truth effect: Attaching warnings to a subset of fake news headlines increases perceived accuracy of headlines without warnings. *Management Science*.

40

See 38

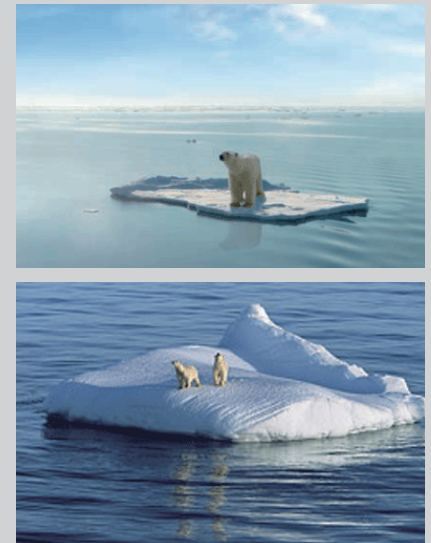


Figure 3.2.1: The composed polar bear in original article

Figure 3.2.2: A factual Geography Photograph after revise

41

Gleick, P. H., Adams, R. M., Amasino, R. M., Anders, E., Anderson, D. J., Anderson, W. W., ... & Bax, A. (2010). Climate change and the integrity of science. *Science*, 328(5979), 689-690.

42

Braasch, G. (2013). Climate change: Is seeing believing?. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 69(6), 33-41.

straightforward images.⁴² In spite of the inappropriate use of hoax photos, from the position of environmentalists, the “reality” of news photos is to encourage citizens to participate in actions to protect the environment actively. Therefore, the “reality” for ordinary people is the truth of the image itself, but the “reality” in the eyes of environmentalists is fostering the awareness of environmental protection.



Figure 3.3: Robert Hurt, NASA's astronomical visualization scientist, uses Photoshop at work, 2015. Photograph from Adobe.

Is the Universe photoshopped?

Another example correlates with astronomical images. When those astronomical images such as the Sun, Mars, Neptune, and the Nebulae released on NASA's official website come into the view of the public, people grasped with admiration at the magnificence of the universe, but are these images trustworthy realities?

In recent years, some news reports revealed that the astronomical images released by NASA were found duplicated cloud patterns by Photoshop. In a blog

from Adobe Corporate Communications (2015), the editor interviewed an astronomical visualization scientist Robert Hurt for expounding the Photoshop techniques that NASA manipulated to those “propaganda” images.⁴³ (Figure 3.3) For instance, an original astronomical photograph taken from devices such as the Hubble Space Telescope is composed of three images of a single color corresponding to the light color of red, green, and blue. The visualization scientist from NASA composites the three monochromatic photos into colorful ones through RGB color mode in Photoshop (Figure 3.4). Thus, the precondition of the

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How Photoshop Helps NASA Reveal the Unseeable. (2015, September 28). Retrieved from <https://theblog.adobe.com/how-photoshop-helps-nasa-reveal-the-unseeable/>

occupation includes both astronomy knowledge and information visualization skills.

The “Blue Marble”?

The image of earth that spectators are familiar with is considered a perfect blue marble sphere. However, the pictures we see are proved modified due to the observation of duplicated patterns via Photoshop. The designer of the famous “Blue Marble” earth image, Robert Simmon, claimed that his work was “*purely about communication*,” which rendering scientific data to comprehensible and visible images such as the details in atmosphere and oceans of the earth superficial appearance.⁴⁴ As a result, the astronomical technique is not the sole factor that fabricates these images. Besides, visualization scientists from NASA utilize their imagination to supplement the details and generate the images of the planet.

Is this a fake “reality”? In a social context, NASA stands in a scientific position, with the purpose to disseminate astronomical images that meet the expectation of the galaxy to the public. Thus, the public interest in astronomy is aroused, and the subsequent research could be supported financially.

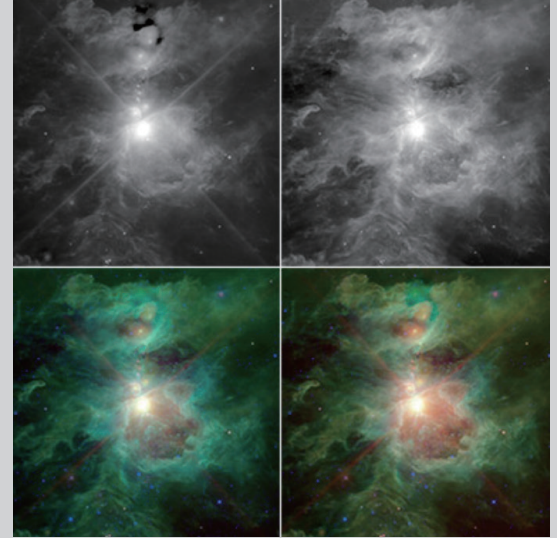


Figure 3.4: Different color channels of the Orion Nebula, M42. Photograph from Adobe.

“

My part was integrating the surface, clouds, and oceans to match people’s expectations of how Earth looks from space.”

– Robert Simmon, Lead Data Visualizer and Information Designer, 2012

44

Jarrell, E. M. (2012, June 12). Robert Simmon - AKA Mr. Blue Marble. Retrieved from <https://www.nasa.gov/centers/goddard/about/people/RSimmon.html>

Back to the question, what causes “subjective reality” in Journalism? Environmentalists promulgate the visible “reality” of Global Warming. Likewise, NASA promulgates the circumstantial “reality” through scientific data and artists’ imagination. **The findings imply that when people stand in different positions, then the positions determine for them to see the “reality.”**

3.2 Aesthetics reality in different eras

Human beings' innate appreciation and exploration of the essence of beauty is so-called aesthetics, which is a branch of philosophy as well. People's aesthetics preferences are gradually changing with different historical backgrounds and cultural environments. An Individual's aesthetic attitude is different owing to the variety of thinking mode and living standards, and some might not share the same attitude towards beauty with the mainstream. Reality is multifaceted, and so is aesthetics. Aesthetics can be considered as a representation of reality. Subjective aesthetics, like subjective reality, is not a single layer.

Contemporary culture is a crucial factor that dominates aesthetic sensibilities. We can perceive from commercial advertisements that, along with the evolution of era and culture, mass aesthetics changed rapidly, so as the “reality.”

Women in the past, worst beauty critics for their own

Naturally, women have a more rigorous standard while judging their own appearances and shapes in the past. According to a survey published on 1997 by *Psychology Today* on how Americans view their bodies, 56% of women are dissatisfied with their overall appearance, and their most loathing parts include the abdomen (71%), weight (66%), and hips (60%).⁴⁵

Both portraits in the picture belong to the same face. What distinguished the two portraits (Figure 3.5)? In a promotion: *Real Beauty Sketches* released by Dove in 2013, a forensic artist portrayed several women depended on oral descriptions with-

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Garner, D. (1997, Feb 1). Body Image in America: Survey Results. *Psychology Today*, Retrieved from www.psychologytoday.com/us/articles/199702/body-image-in-america-survey-results.



Figure 3.5: Screenshot from *Real Beauty Sketches*

out observing their faces. The portrait on the left was sketched by the woman's description, while a thorough stranger who just had a short conversation depicted the right one. "*My cheekbones are high, there's crows feet around the eyes, and freckles...*" says

the participant in this film. However, when she saw her portrait from the perspective of a spectator, she got surprised, "*she looks more happy.*"⁴⁶ The underlying factor is that women used to magnify their faults and imperfections, but ignore the other beautiful individualities.

The fashion of "imperfect" teeth

It is the external social atmosphere and aesthetic inclinations that influence self-criticism of one's appearance. In the past, people thought that healthy skin color, trim figure, delicate features, and neat teeth could represent the "beauty." Nevertheless, the public gradually occurred to pursue individuality and converted to more inclusive of "imperfections" these years.

Since 2010, high street fashion brands and models in several fashion shows have been fascinated with the gap between front teeth. Initially, models Georgia Jagger and Lara Stone were controversial because of the gaps within their teeth. Nevertheless, this has made them different. *The New York Times* acclaimed Lara Stone as an "Anti-Model,"⁴⁷ who has an ador-

46

Long, H. (2013, April 20). Dove's "real beauty sketches" ad deserves some praise. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/apr/20/dove-real-beauty-sketches-ad-women-perfection>

47

Horyn, C. (2007, March 1). The Anti-Model. Retrieved from <https://runway.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/03/01/the-anti-model/>

able nature and converts the “imperfect” teeth gaps to her personal magnetism. Due to her advantage of singular facial features, Lara was congruous with the portrait of stylish women and became trendy instantly. (Figure 3.6) She was also titled “Girl of the Year” by *British Vogue* and “fashion’s It girl” by *W Magazine*.⁴⁸



Figure 3.6.1: Lara Stone on Vogue Magazine Cover [Italy], August 2017



Figure 3.6.2: Lara Stone on i-D Magazine Cover [United Kingdom], June 2015

With the increasing reputation of these supermodels, a few young people even had dental plastic surgery intentionally to shape their teeth into gaps. “Imperfect” teeth stir up a sense of realness to people, which is precisely the “reality” of beauty that the current fashion industry aspires to manifest.

Gucci Beauty’s latest set of lipstick posters (Figure 3.7) shows the other side of Dani Miller, the lead singer of the American punk band Surfbort. The lips and irregular teeth in the close-up lens conveyed a strong visual impact on the audience. In this regard, some people feel disappointed and could not identify with defective idols. Despite that, more voices are admiring and bracing for the courage to present the authenticity of

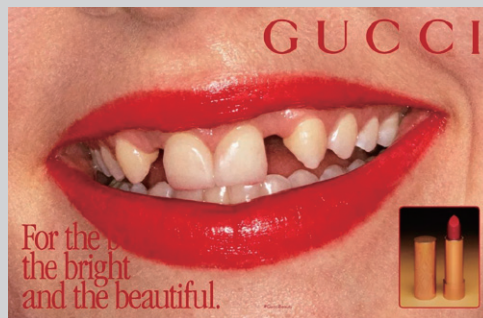


Figure 3.7: Poster series from Gucci Beauty, the left one shows Dani Miller’s teeth

48

Fisher, A. (2010, October 23). Lara Stone: ‘I think naughty photoshoots suit my personality’. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeand-style/2010/oct/24/lara-stone-model-fashion-vogue-david-wal-liams>

49

Cacciatore, B. (2019, May 6). Does Guccis New Lipstick Ad Make You Uncomfortable? Good. Retrieved from <https://www.glamour.com/story/gucci-lipstick-ad-teeth>

natural beauty. The creative director Alessandro Michele interpreted that the campaign “*conveys a clear message that authentic beauty lies in imperfection.*”⁴⁹

Embracing the flaw

Over beautifying in social media is considered a delusive gimmick. Therefore, several commercial advertisements dedicated to embracing the reality of beauty, and the models they selected are encouraged to show themselves without a single modification.

In 2017 DIESEL published a stylish promotional video *Go with the flaw* on YouTube.⁵⁰ The characters in the film are “imperfect” collections in ordinary people’s eyes: unibrows, dental braces, and Heterochromia iris (eyes in a difference of coloration). Still, the director composed an enthusiastic lifestyle and a courageous mindset with these “flaws” that differentiate from the mass aesthetic in the promotion. Furthermore, it encouraged the freedom of pursuing “beauty” and the reality of personality.

Japanese creative graphic designer Yuni Yoshida is talented at manipulating surreal components in her works, and the distinguishing features of her design are ingenious composition and bold color collocations.⁵¹ Yoshida cooperated with Watanabe Naomi, a prominent comedian from Japan, to design advertising posters for Naomi’s clothing brand PUNYUS. One of their collaborative works is considerably impressive (Figure 3.8). Unlike traditional cosmetics advertisements, Yoshida has tailored an exclusive look for Watanabe. With confidence and even

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DIESEL. (2017, September 6). *Go with the flaw* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYxG1ASrYKo>

51

Johnny. (2018, January 11). Yuni Yoshida’s Innovative Visuals for Co-median Naomi Watanabe. Retrieved from <http://www.spoon-tamago.com/2018/01/11/yuni-yoshida-naomi-watanabe/>

THE SUBJECTIVE REALITY

somewhat exaggerated body gestures, the lipstick and blusher tray are tightly squeezed in front of the screen. Amazingly, the defective figure without embellishment and the crowded composition featured Watanabe's bewitchment and made the poster fascinating as well.

The reality and illusion in society correspond to beauty and ugliness in Aesthetics. There is no boundary between beauty and ugliness in art or fashion. From these facts, one may conclude that the changeable aesthetics can be ascribed to the development of our social environment in different eras.



Figure 3.8: Poster for Watanabe Naomi, designed by Yuni Yoshida

DESIGN CONCEPT AND MATERIALS

The previous chapters illustrated the underlying determinants of subjective reality from both news and aesthetic perspectives. Differentiated postures that people adopted would generate different perceptions of reality in news events; Epochs that people lived in would originate different realities of aesthetic preference. The design section of the thesis project comprises the two causations, and the corresponding materials are selected from the latest news and current aesthetic circumstances to explore the means of media blending and reorganizing, which is the response for the third research question.

4.1 Design concept

The design renders no assistance to discern the “reality.” Though, this study explores how to inspire people to comprehend the varying dimensions of “reality” by visually manifesting “subjective reality” of multiple standpoints. Therefore, in the design process, the project is positioned as a fictional independent publisher *Reality Daily*.

There are principally two purposes of fabricating the independent publication. One is to practice visual expressions such as composing text and images and highlighting contrary perspectives. The techniques involved, such as publication design, newspaper redesign, and web design, are the primary manifestation of the thesis project. The other one is to amplify social contradictions and opposites as an objective spectator.

The rationale of the name Reality Daily is the imitation of newspapers and online publishers. Moreover, the name suggests that reality changes day by day.

For the design of the independent publication, the theme of 2019-2020 Hong Kong Protests is selected to signify the subjective reality provoked by different postures in new events. Another issue is about the emerging Instagram AR filters, which embody the subjective reality induced by different epochs.

During the process of publication design, a variety of different typographic structures were practiced to a better demonstration of the contrast of the content. Meanwhile, to achieve the coordination of the two themes, a prototype of the *Reality Daily* webpage was created.

4.2 Material collection

In order to expose the design intention as objectively as possible, and to improve the reader's sense of immersion, this study has the following considerations in selecting the elements of design materials:

Involving two or more different stakeholders

Different stakeholders in the affair hold diverse or contradictory judgments

As a social event, it should be universal experiences in daily life so that people could feel empathy for it

There should be available images, news articles, and video materials to promote the design process

At the same time, it should arouse the significance of deep ponderation

Figure 4.1: The illustration of the Criteria for selecting materials

After screening, two cases were finally selected, which is the Hong Kong “extradition” protests and Instagram AR filters. Both of the topics received a wide range of disputes in the period from 2019 to 2020.

The Hong Kong protests include the following contents: the beginnings of the protest, the introduction of the process of several significant protests, the discrepancies between news reports in mainland of China and foreign media, and the various postures involved in the incident.

The theme of the AR filter involves the following contents: the origin of the filter, the background technology of AR, the characteristics of the AR filter, and the cooperation between fashion brands and AR artists.

4.2.1 Hong Kong Extradition Protests

The causation of the “Extradition” protest movements that happened in Hong Kong was the amendment of the extradition bill by Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Government Lam and the Hong Kong judicial department. Once passed, the bill will allow the extradition of criminal fugitives to jurisdictions with which Hong Kong lacks an extradition deal, including mainland China.⁵² The Extradition Bill is considered a restriction of Hong Kong citizens from exercising their freedom and democratic rights.

The motivation for choosing the Hong Kong protest to signify multiple dimensions of subjective reality is due to the consideration of the complexity of the event. In this ongoing protest, we can notice different stands from diverse stakeholders. Conflicts and frictions between the Hong Kong government, Hong Kong demonstrators, and the Hong Kong police keep escalating. Moreover, the contrasting positions of the three parties - the Hong Kong media, international media, and mainland media - lead us to perceive different viewpoints, some of which are even completely contradictory statements on the same incident.

For example, radical protesters broke into the Legislative Council on July 21, held up the banner of “*There are no thugs but tyranny,*” masked, black umbrellas, and spray-painted on the emblem of Hong Kong (Figure 4.2). The local media *Ming Pao* in Hong Kong released the article, in which the government declared the radicals as “rioters.” Meanwhile, the Washington Post reported the same incident, interviewing a protester who



Figure 4.2: The protester were spraying paint on the HK emblem, photo from HKFP

broke into the Legislative Council that day, *"If we retreat, we will be the 'rioters' tomorrow."*⁵³ The article also mentioned that after the demonstrators evacuated, the Hong Kong government proactively invited the media to film and report the mess in the Legislative Council that was once occupied by the demonstrators. To conclude, both of the media reported the "reality," but the focus has been biased due to their postures. They highlighted the manner of the media platform and concealed some "details" in the story.

If citizens in China merely notice relevant information from social media such as Weibo and WeChat without browsing the international news, the "reality" they perceive is also one-sided. Most of the domestic media's comments on the Hong Kong protests were neutral or negative. An interesting phenomenon is that popular news articles with millions of retweets on WeChat are critical of Hong Kong protests. For example, one of the articles argued that the Western media's attitude towards Hong Kong "Extradition" demonstration was changing their inclination from approval to disapproval.⁵⁴

Besides, there is an interview video (Figure 4.3) that has numerous retweets on the internet. The *DW News* interviewed Joey Siu, one of the initiators of student protests from the University of Hong Kong in November 2019.⁵⁵ The interviewer listed the violence in Hong Kong and indicated that their protest was gradually getting out of control. And there are quite a lot violence conflicts between HK police and demonstrators. (Figure 4.4) It is the violence of protests

53

Sala, I. M., & Lim, L. (2019, July 11). Hong Kong's propaganda battle is playing out in the media ... Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/07/11/hong-kongs-propaganda-battle-is-playing-out-media-cyber-space/>

54

Yuwen, L.G. (2019, November 13). Zhexia, lian xifang meiti dou kaishi qianze Xianggang Baotu le [Western media begin to condemn Hong Kong mob of protesters]. Retrieved from <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/aQt4mOvi4SyUE-FktZhEfw>

55

DW News. (2019, November 7). Will violence kill Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement? | Conflict Zone [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9n-NeO0yWYk>



Figure 4.3: The screenshot from the DW News, 2019



Figure 4.4: A police officer points a firearm at a protester during a clash outside Kwai Chung Police Station on July 30. Photo: AFP

56

Bipartisan Group of Lawmakers Nominates Hong Kong's Pro-Democracy Movement for the Nobel Peace Prize. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.cecc.gov/media-center/press-releases/bipartisan-group-of-lawmakers-nominate-hong-kong's-pro-democracy>

57

Lo, A. (2020, March 11). Violent protesters for the Nobel Peace Prize? You must be joking. Retrieved from <https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3074730/violent-protesters-nobel-peace-prize-you-must-be-joking>

that violated the protesters' original democratic aspirations.

In January 2020, another piece of news released on the Internet: Six members of the United States Congress nominated the Hong Kong Democratic Protest 2020 for the Nobel Peace Prize.⁵⁶ For the same event, if people search keywords in domestic searching engines such

as Baidu and Bing, they could only observe the critical articles from domestic publications. Some news journalists declared that the six members of the parliament are hostile to China, and that even United States has been instigating the protests in Hong Kong.⁵⁷

The debate between truth and hoax is no longer critical in this study. Words and tones which represent the postures of different media, are indeed affecting the information we receive and blurring our subjective reality. Analogous to a Rashomon, everyone maintained their stance and argued for themselves. Hence, veracity becomes undetectable and reality generated from different subjective comprehension.

These are precisely what this thesis eagers to explore: to present rationally what people could see from their perspectives and what they could not see from other perspectives. Perhaps while manifesting contradictory information, people can see different realities existed concurrently from this design project.

4.2.2 AR Filters

Instagram, launched in October 2010, has witnessed the transformation of modern aesthetics. It promptly became prevailing throughout the world thanks to its lifestyle-sharing attributes. In the era of visual communication of the digital landscape, Instagram caters to the user's desire to share photos and life moments with convenient but fancy filters. The function, all kinds of vogue filters, is the principal reason for the prevalence of Instagram. The emergence of filters is the consequence of dual impact from aesthetic tendency and expansion of the social network.

A brief story of face filter

The existence of filters was originally a retouching template produced by commercial photographers to save time and increase efficiency. The creator of the *Rise* (Figure 4.5), which is one of Instagram's initial filters, is a commercial photographer. He created several retouching programs for landscape photos in order to improve the production of retouching. He also mentioned, *"the photos themselves are already dated, they look like they're from 2010. Why? Because that filter was really popular at the time."*⁵⁸ Since the filter itself is at the forefront of aesthetic tendency, it makes sense that the photo with filters will never fall behind fashion. If a filter is not stylish enough, it would definitely be abandoned by Instagram users.

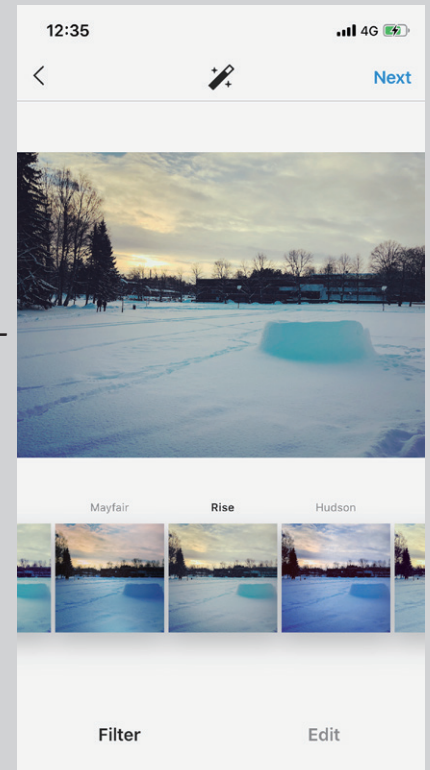


Figure 4.5: The screenshot of Rise filter in Instagram

58

Johnson, L. (2017, January 15). Filter focus: the story behind the original Instagram filters. Retrieved from <https://www.techradar.com/news/filter-focus-the-story-behind-the-original-instagram-filters>

AR filters created by users

Nowadays, the development of AR technology is maturing, and it has been implemented for producing face filters since 2016. The principle of the AR filter technique is to recognize the data from facial features and then superimpose the 3D graphics or animations prepared before on the recognized face in the camera. Once the face is recognized, no matter how the user turns their head, the three-dimensional image will locate the features and track the movements instantly.

A few pioneers contributed to the development of AR filters software. In 2017, **Snapchat** launched its open-source AR filter software for users to create and upload AR filters by themselves. **Spark AR Studio** (also owned by Facebook) developed the most frequently downloaded AR filter software. However, only launched recently in August 2019. The software is available for free download on the official website, as well as related tutorials and templates in terms of promoting accessibility and quality of the creation. Users can also preview the filter effect in real-time with the mobile phone app in parallel.

The template library, convenient operation, and personalized production reduce the learning effort for users to create filters. Meanwhile, it stimulates the passion for creating their characteristic AR filters and sharing. These approaches that Facebook adopted, such as launching the free Spark AR software, are mutually beneficial to arouse user's attention on filters and contribute to the upsurge of AR filters.

Features of AR filters

The keywords that appear simultaneously with AR filters are Cyberpunk, futurism, mechanization, and Surrealist art, which is inevitable in terms of AR filter art. As mentioned earlier, filters are the embodiment of aesthetic tendency. Regarding the existence with a noticeable sensation of technology, the AR Filter manifests the yearning for frontier technology and the cyber era.

The first AR face filter prevalent throughout the internet was Beauty 3000, designed by Johanna Jaskowska. The related tags include more than 800 selfies that “*give the user glossy, luminescent skin.*” (Figure 4.6) The distinguishing feature of the face filter is a smooth plastic transparent mask that attaches to the human face. In combination with the effect of illumination and cosmetics, the person in the photo resembles a fancy plastic model.

Another filter is an imitation of a cyber creature under the human skin that manipulates the human body (Figure 4.7). While applying the filter, users can see the animation that their faces are opened up from inside, exposing the “real” mechanical core inside.

Filters and fashion brand

Several updates of the Instagram application in recent years have provided brands or merchants with new sections on the profile page, such as Stories (instant selfie video, up to 60 seconds), IGTV (extended video of excellence, up to one hour) and Shops (online commodity purchase).⁵⁹ Statistics determined

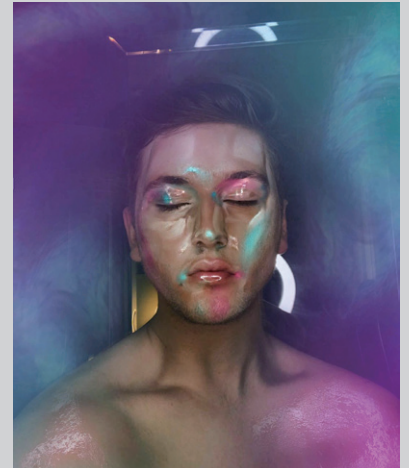


Figure 4.6: The first popular AR filter: Beauty 3000, photo: Instagram user @christianxavierroyle



Figure 4.7: Filter: Robotface - Tap the screen, and the face will open from inside the head. photo: Instagram user @kym_fiala

59

Ifeanyi, K. C. (2019, May 16). Instagram really, really wants you to shop and watch IGTV. Retrieved from <https://www.fastcompany.com/90351326/instagram-really-really-wants-you-to-shop-and-watch-igtv>

60

Newberry, C. (2019, December 2). 37 Instagram Statistics That Matter to Marketers in 2020. Retrieved from <https://blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-statistics/>

that 1/3 of the Stories clicked by users are posted by business brands.⁶⁰ The Instagram platform provides fashion brands with the most influential consumers—the younger generation, and AR filters are the latest fad among the category.



Figure 4.8.1: The screenshot from Vimeo: *This is Human*, by Ines Alpha, 2019

Figure 4.8.2: Instagram homepage of Bimba Y Lola

As a consequence, in this virtual world carnival of AR filters, many fashion brands are acting in accordance with the aesthetic evolution and discovering its potential commercial merit. The first to discover business opportunities were cosmetic brands and forefront fashion brands. AR make-up artist Ines Alpha is currently collaborating with some fashion brands to apply her AR productions in commercial contexts. The promotional video (Figure 4.8) released by the Spanish niche fashion brand **Bimba Y Lola** is such a cooperation with Alpha.⁶¹ The brand's own peculiarities are superbly integrated with the fanciful AR filters created by Alpha.

61

Ines Alpha & Bimba Y Lola. (2019, October). *This is Human* [Video]. Vimeo. <https://vimeo.com/362977803>

The “cyberbabe” wearing AR filter

In addition to virtual face filters, virtual idols are also sought-after on the internet. A new compound term, “Cyberbabe,” is applied to address these virtual idols at present. Lil Miquela, the most favored fictional CGI supermodel with over 2 million followers, posted her first photo on Instagram in 2016. She has a healthy complexion, a slim figure, adorable freckles, and even a CGI boyfriend.⁶² AR artist Ines Alpha, who is introduced before, has also created AR face filters for her as a birthday gift.

62

Petty, F. (2018, April 26). what we can learn about the cult of in-sta-influencers from lil miquela. Retrieved from https://i-d.vice.com/en_uk/article/vbxkna/lil-miquela-instagram-influencer

(Figure 4.9) – a virtual filter created for a virtual character. The dual “virtual” implied the fanaticism of the futuristic aesthetic throughout the network.

“Over-real” face filter

It is astonishing that in the boom of cyber and futuristic AR filters, there are still disparate styles that seem “over-real” for contemporary culture. In 2019, AR designer Silich Masha uploaded on Instagram an original work of AR face filter that emulated the effects of botulinum injection (Figure 4.10). The image was so realistic that the face filter was used and speedily reposted by countless users. However, it was officially taken down by Instagram, on the grounds of the possibility to induce cosmetic operation conduct. It is indeed conceivable that the withdrawal is for the sake of user’s mental health and discouragement of plastic surgery.

The case triggered people to regard the polarization in filter culture. On the one hand, the AR filter is a fictional “future” hinges on the fabrication of science fiction movies or literature; on the other hand, it is a magnified version of the “present.” In other words, people yearn for the uncharted future and the grotesque imagination it brings about, but are still eager to detect the authenticity of the contemporary world.

In conclusion, whether it is a landscape photo filter, the wave of “over-real” facial cosmetic surgery, or fanaticism towards the virtual CGI icon “Cyberbabe,” they all correspond to the synthesis of “reality” in the past, the present, and the future.

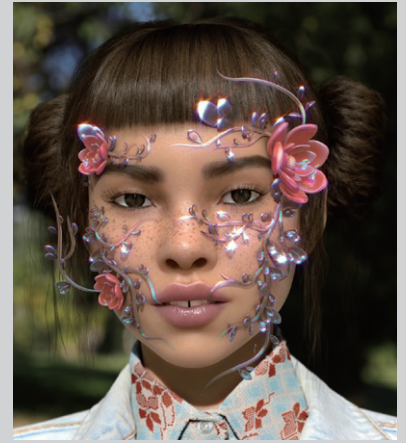


Figure 4.9.1: Instagram celebrity, CGI model, Lil Miquela wearing the AR face filter made by Alpha.



Figure 4.9.2: Lil Miquela and her CGI boyfriend. Photos from Instagram

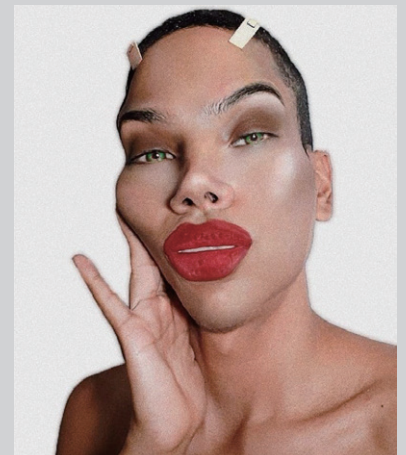


Figure 4.10: The Botox filter created by Silich Masha

DESIGN PROCESS

5.1 The brand of Reality Daily

Reality Daily consists of a virtual web page and series of independent publications: “*If You See From Hong Kong*” and “*If You See Through Times*.” The fiction publisher concentrates on social issues that are drawing public attention and arousing bitter controversy, collects and collages information from a unique perspective, and conveys the “reality” from multiple dimensions to the spectators.

In terms of the choice of colors, black and white are adopted as contrasting colors, high-saturation of coral red, and low-saturation of ultramarine blue are used as complementary colors to underline the conflict and represent the opposing postures in the same piece of news. The colors (Figure 5.1) are also utilized in the processing of pictures to attain a sense of visual consistency.

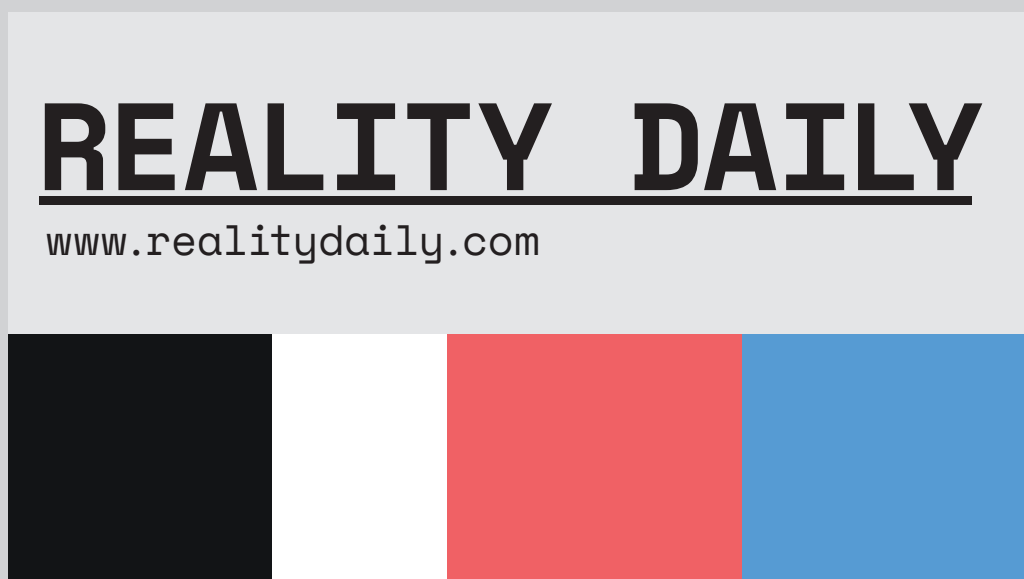


Figure 5.1: The brand of Reality Daily and the choice of color

The content of the design revolves around a fictional independent publishing medium. Therefore, as a font with a sense of science fiction, SPACE MONO (Figure 5.2, 5.3) is selected to harmonize the spirit of the brand. This font is an isometric font developed by the Google team. The isometric font means the equivalent width of each letter. The geometric shapes and other details of the font are relatively different from ordinary fonts and is designed especially for screen display and for large headlines. Moreover, isometric fonts are commonly seen in science fiction and movies, which sparks the sensation of science fiction and futurism. Accordingly, both the headline of publications and web prototypes employ the font to construct a surreal universe to readers.

Figure 5.2: Space Mono, photo from Google Font

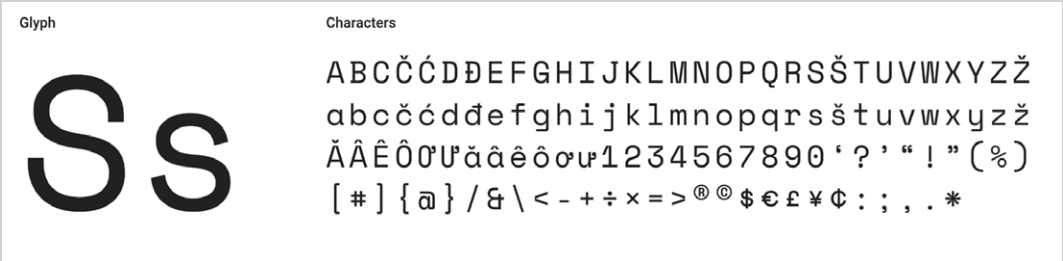


Figure 5.3: The book of Space Mono, photo from Google Font



5.2 Exploring the expressions of contrast

To gain a thorough grasp of both news reality and aesthetic reality, typesettings and expressions that highlight the contradiction of text and pictures are the pillar of this thesis.

5.2.1 Color contrast

The contrast of colors is the most intuitive and practical approach. When designing the contents of the book *"If You See From Hong Kong,"* (Figure 5.4) the contrasting colors that occupy

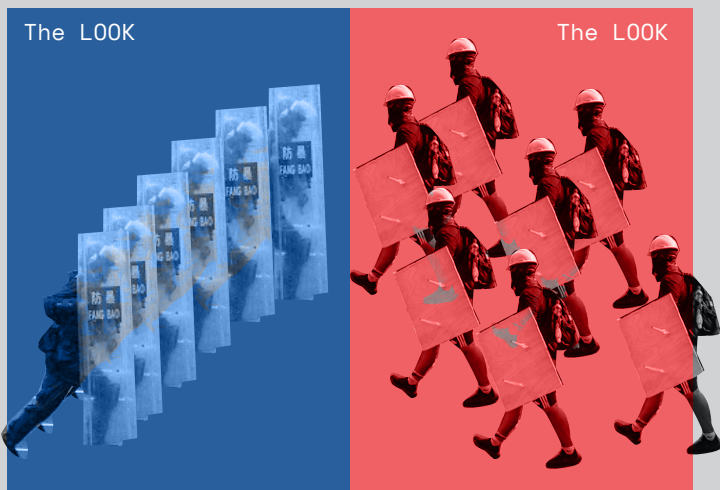


Figure 5.4: The contrasting color in the book *"If you see from Hong Kong"*

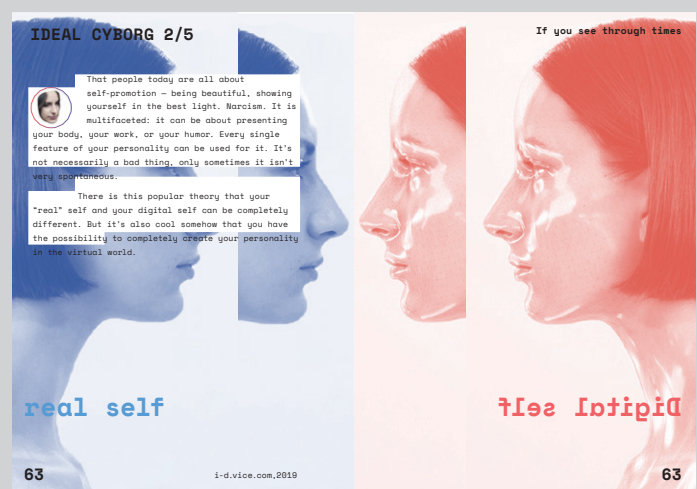
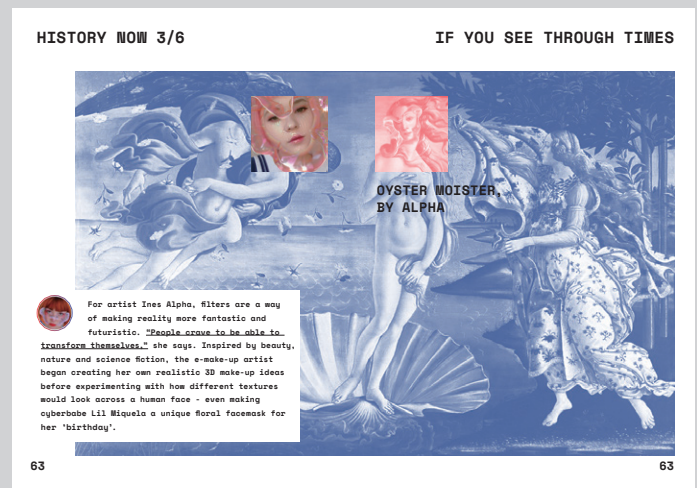


Figure 5.5: The contrasting color in the book *"If you see through times"*, blue for reality, and red for virtual.

the entirety of the cover insinuates opposing viewpoints for the audience at first glance.

Furthermore, the equivalent logic is applied for the processing of pictures in the inner pages. For instance, in the Hong Kong incident, red is the dominant color that depicts the demonstrator, and the blue color symbolizes the Hong Kong police. In the book *“If You See Through Times,”* the representative of reality is blue, and the red color is the illustration for the virtual face filter (Figure 5.5). In such a manner, the combination of red and blue is not merely the primary color that conducts overall design but also a metaphor for potential conflicts.

5.2.2 Text contrast

The contrast that highlights the semantics of the text can also help strengthen the visual elements. The text materials of Hong Kong news events are relatively abundant, which caused heavy time consumption of information sorting.

In the initial stage, there is an illustration of the typesetting method listed below (Figure 5.6). The primary conception is to depict two versions of the story in Hong Kong protest in this one spread. The Chinese text on the left page is extracted from Xinhuanet’s *“Real Records of Violent Protest in Hong Kong,”* and the English contents on the right are retrieved from BBC News *“Hundred Words Briefing on Hong Kong Protests.”* With the intention of an instant grasp of conflicts for readers, a summary of the content with quotes is translated next to the main paragraph. With the translation, thereby, both Chinese and foreign readers can understand the opposition of the two views in the book.

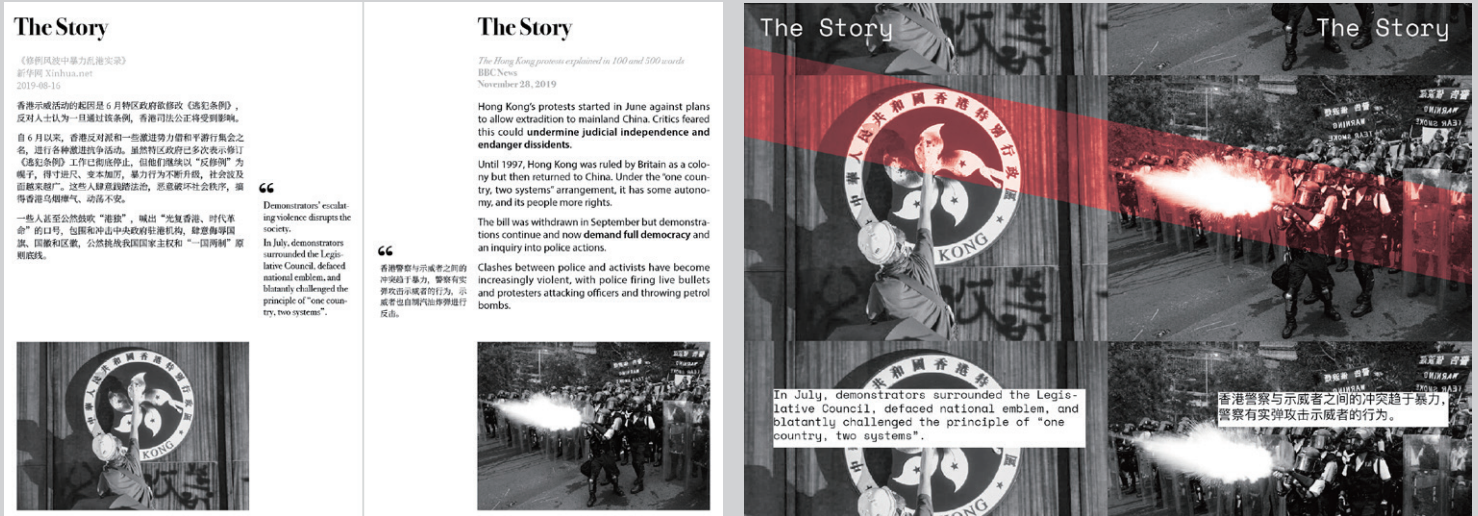


Figure 5.6: The main body is in two languages, and there are translations beside, from "If you see from Hong Kong"

Figure 5.7: An improved version, with pictures amplified.

Here is another version of composing. The feedback from one colleague argued that *"There is too much text to make the contrast you want to convey at a glance."* The text content, which should be a support to create conflicts and contrasts, has become a disturbance in the communication of the picture and blurred the expression of the design. Therefore, in the revision, pictures occupied the dominant proportion of the spread, and leading information is outlined (Figure 5.7).

5.2.3 Pictures contrast

The contrast of the photos accounts for nearly 80% of the design. Pictures in newspapers are the most convincing, but also the misleading reason for people's judgment. Quite a few fake news rely on people's natural confidence in pictures to accomplish the purpose of distorting facts by Photoshop or deliberately misreading it.

During the browsing and collection of pictures, the source information of the pictures has always been labeled (Figure 5.8). To respect the origin is one of the motivations, and the other is that sources of the picture speak for the position of the news media.



Figure 5.8: Labeled the source media in printed phtots, the date of the incidents were marked as well.

5.2.4 Self-invented contrast

Sometimes the material itself has no contradictory element for interpretation of reality and illusion, but we can “create” contrast in such a situation.

When dealing with the theme of AR filters, the vast majority of picture materials is obtained from Instagram, but they are perfect makeup with exaggerated glossy Cyberpunk filters. The filter effect is similar to each other, and the sole difference is the face of the user. Consequently, in order to create a contrast of aesthetics, several materials were explored through Instagram’s filters, such as iconic oil paintings and pictures of antique sculptures on the computer screen or book pages (Figure 5.9).

The faces from renaissance paintings, wearing Cyberpunk filters in the 21st century, speak for the conflicts and contradictions that are visible to the naked eye and even lead to a profound reflection.

DESIGN PROCESS

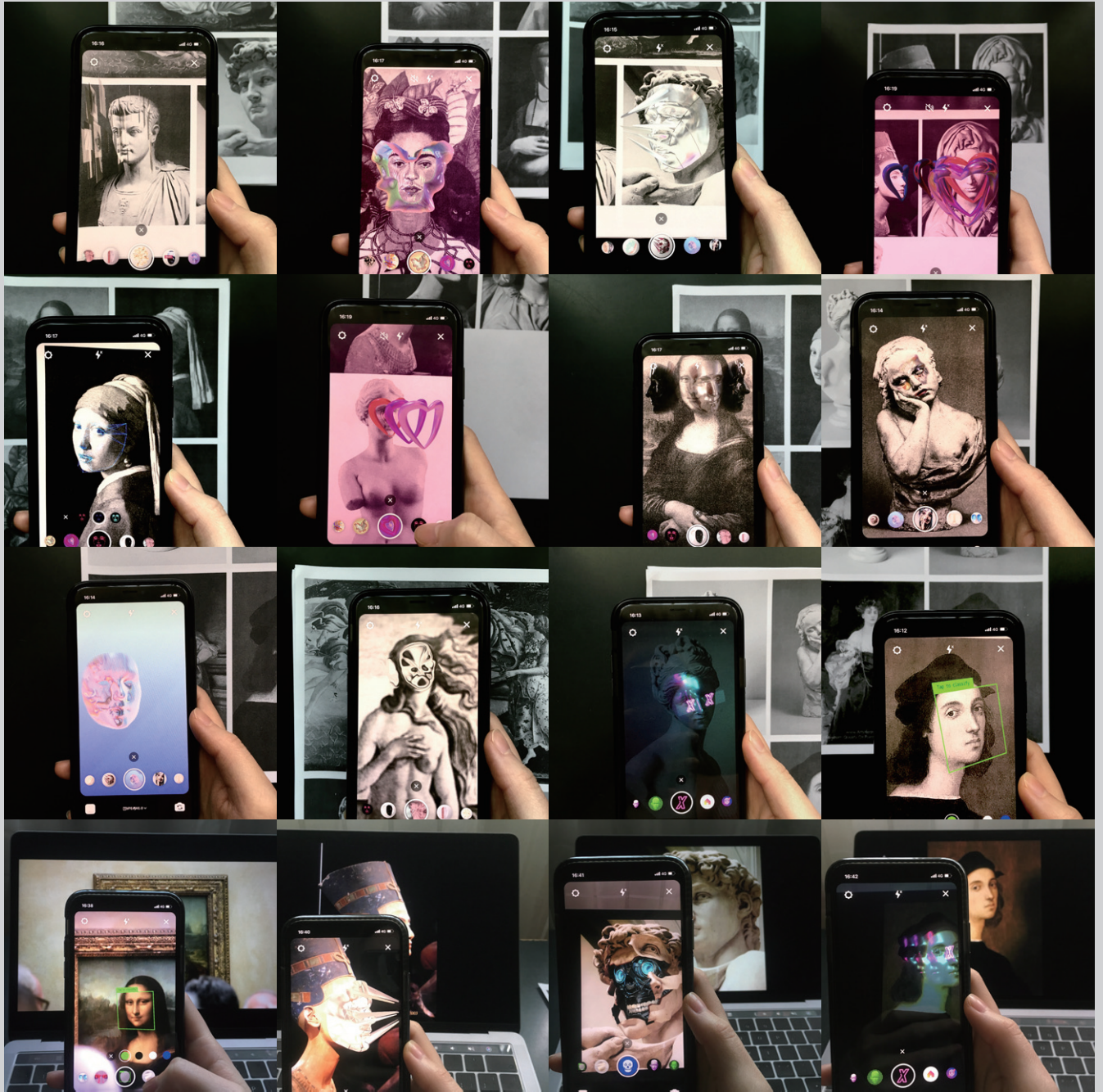


Figure 5.9: The Instagram face filters used on various photos of paintings and sculptures on my computer screen.

5.3 Exploring the structure of narrative

The exploration of the three narrative structures is mainly reflected in the procedure of the book “*If You See From Hong Kong.*”

The first step is to illustrate some expected layouts (Figure 5.10). According to the draft, I started composing with pictures and texts and print them out to compare the reading experiences

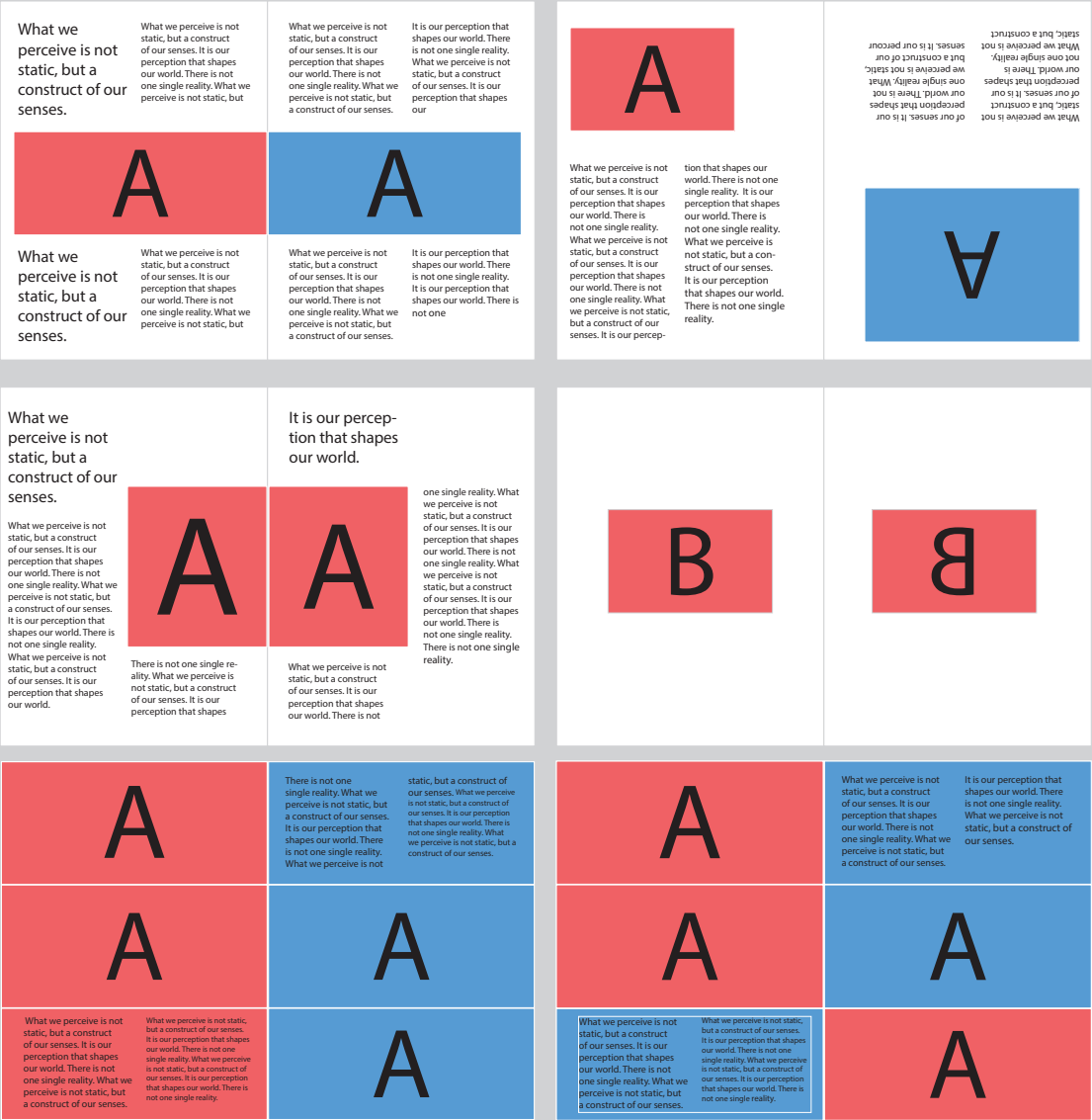


Figure 5.10: Different expected layout templates

5.3.1 Multi-line parallel

Regarding the previous discussion in Chapter 4, there are multiple parallels from different perspectives in the narrative logic of the Hong Kong protests. In the process of amassing materials, it is detected that except for the dissimilarity from national news and foreign news, there are many disparate voices within the Hong Kong region.

After classifying various standpoints, the opinions can be approximately divided into two categories: views from the Hong Kong government and voices from Hong Kong protesters. In addition to these central classifications, voices from other minorities deserve consideration likewise. **Hong Kong media, the judiciary, Hong Kong police, and foreign tourists** are associated with the protests as well in accordance with the collected news articles. The interests of these minorities (or stakeholders) are affected by different events, so their voices are justifying their positions.

The coexistence of multiple perspectives in the Hong Kong incident furnished new ideas of defining the minorities' positions between government and demonstrators as alternative third-party. The third-parties would vary according to specific situations (Figure 5.11). For example, during the violence at the University of Hong Kong in November 2019, some mainland students were attacked by radical demonstrators. For the Hong Kong Anti-Mask incident, the third party is “**judge**”; For the demonstration in the airport, the third party is “**foreign tourists**”; For the violent conflict within the University of Hong



Figure 5.11: The replaceable stakeholders in the incidents

DESIGN PROCESS



Kong, then the third party is “Mainland students.” Their positions are distinct from those of the government and demonstrators, so they are “subjective reality” in parallel.

A typical illustration is a series of demonstrations triggered by the Anti-Mask Act in October 2019. The protest includes three parties: the Hong Kong government commanded by Lam, the Hong Kong judiciary, and protesters against the Anti-Mask Law. This example prompts a multi-line parallel structure. (Figure 5.12) The views of the three parties are embodied by red, ultramarine, and powder blue, respectively. Then the page is divided horizontally into three color sections, and the narrative lines of different color blocks are split apart. Each narrative line will have a relevant news report, and the page on the right corresponds to a sentence and image expressing the leading view-point.

As a result, the reader has the freedom to determine one of the narrative lines to proceed. In other terms, the multiple narrative lines are parallel, and readers can observe three attitudes of the incident concurrently, as well as “subjective reality” from three perspectives.

Figure 5.12: The structure experiment, from a paper dummy to the splitting parallels.



Figure 5.13: The interactive “pamphlets” of Anti-Mask Law incident

Another demonstration of three parallels is an interactive interface. The inspiration for the idea comes from pamphlets that have been publicly distributed during the Hong Kong protests. For the first scene, the audience would notice the folding headlines. By tapping one of the headlines, the interface will expand to the Anti-Mask incident from a particular perspective. At the same time, the video will appear along with the text, prompting the reader’s immersive reading experience (Figure 5.13).

5.3.2 Double-line parallel

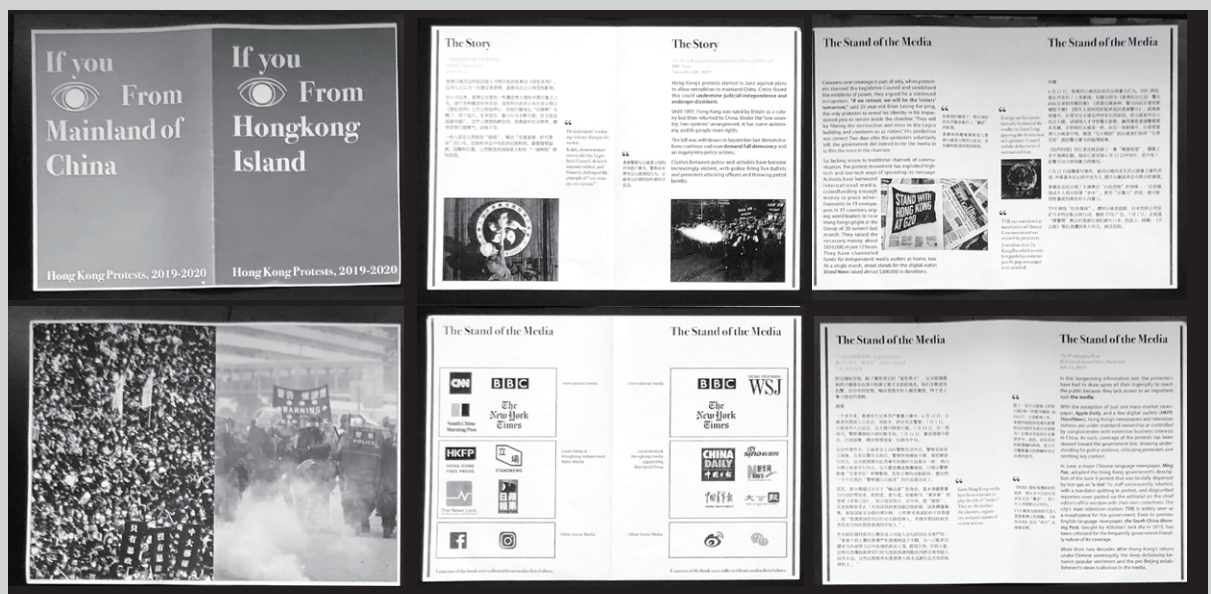
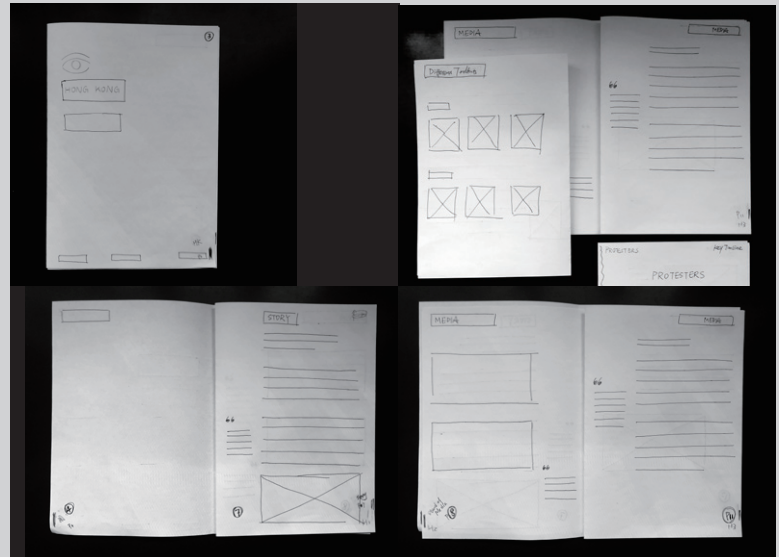
The double-line narrative structure is a reading sequence that begins with both sides of the book. The inspiration for this composition emanates from the small practices that neglected in daily life. It is noticed that many people fetch the book and start browsing from the middle pages of the book, instead of the front cover. Besides, publications are also read from right to left according to Japanese culture. These life experiences inspired the parallel of sequence that allows both sides of reading.

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Figure 5.14: The front and back of the book (this version is a printed sample)

Figure 5.15: The dummy

Figure 5.16: The unbounded pages



The structure of double-sided reading is also applicable to the opposition between the two parties in the topic of Hong Kong Protests. For example, from the front is the storyline of mainland China, and correspondingly the storyline of domestic Hong Kong from the back (Figure 5.14).

The pain point of implementing this structure of layout is that the preview displayed on the screen is not consistent with the expected page order. In order to examine if the pages corresponded to the InDesign files, a dummy (Figure 5.15) is prepared.

After printing out a sample of this version, I binded the pages together and got the double-side reading experiences. By sheer coincidence, the unbound pages (Figure 5.16) have an intuitive contrast between the Hong Kong viewpoint and the mainland China viewpoint. It is due to the correspondence in typesetting.

The two narrative lines will eventually encounter in the book, which means the two camps will merge into the same spread in the middle of the book (Figure 5.17). The integration is a metaphor, implying that the two stances meet with each other in an inclusive manner. Perhaps it is an open question to all spectators: after reading the subjective reality from the opposition, what is the reality from your perspective?

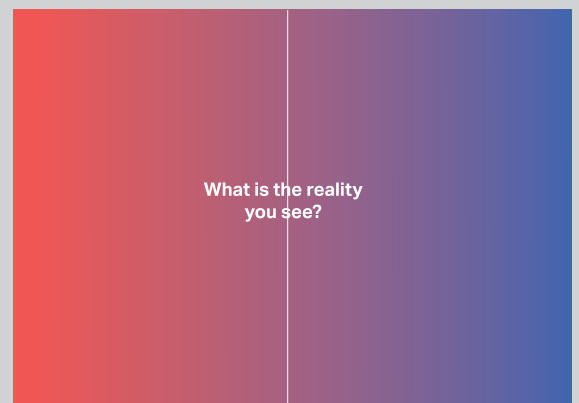


Figure 5.17: The middle page:
"What is the reality you see?"

5.3.3 Flipping-over parallel

The flipping-over parallel is established on the double line, which could also be read from both sides but shifted by 180-degrees.

The reader can browse from the front to center, close it, and turn the book upside down to continue reading (Figure 5.18). Each narrative line will halt at the intermediate page. The flipping structure is actually to symbolize the reverse comprehension between the two positions. And it is a more palpable sense of conflict than the sole comparison of text or image materials.

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Figure 5.18: The flipping-over structure, also read from both sides.

PROJECT RESULTS

The design achievements include the fictional independent publishing platform Reality Daily, the composition for the two books, and the webpage prototype. Besides, learning how to analyze information and sort out the narrative structures in the procedure is also one of the results.

“If You See From Hong Kong”

The editorial design for the book is deemed as a complicated procedure. For the purpose to objectively manifest the conflicting views of multiple parties, it is inevitable to browse and categorize dozens of websites; thus, the outcomes are valuable.

The previous chapter has explored three narrative structures. It was finally resolved to adopt the combination of a multi-line parallel and double-sided layout.

The content is composed of six components: The Story, The Stand of the Media, Different Toolkits (comparison of equipment between Demonstrators and Hong Kong Police), Key Timeline, and The Merge.

The key timeline illustrates several representative incidents during the protest movements. These incidents aroused different postures of stakeholders. For this reason, the multi-parallel structure is applied here.

Readers can browse through the book from both sides since the layout is composed of two sequences. The narrative line from the front consists of news reports in the local press and

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several international publishers. Correspondingly, if you read in inverse order, the content is the information that people in mainland China could observe.

In terms of the two sequences of reading, the page numbers are set oppositely – both the first page and the last page is “1,” and both the second page and the penultimate page is counted as “2.” Additionally, the contents on the spread with the same number demonstrate opposite opinions between Hong Kong and mainland China, which is a fascinating feature for readers to detect.





THE SUBJECTIVE REALITY



The Stand of the Media

The Washington Post
By Louisa Lim and Maria Sala
July 11, 2019

In this burgeoning information war, the protesters have had to draw upon all their ingenuity to reach the public because they lack access to an important tool: the media.

With the exception of just one mass-market newspaper, Apple Daily, and a few digital outlets (like the Stand News), Hong Kong's newspapers and television stations are under mainland ownership or controlled by conglomerates with extensive business interests in China. As such, coverage of the protests has been skewed toward the government line, showing understanding for police violence, criticizing protesters and omitting key context.

In June, a major Chinese-language newspaper, Ming Pao, adopted the Hong Kong government's description of the June 9 protest that was brutally dispersed by tear gas as "a riot." Its staff subsequently rebelled, with a translator quitting in protest, and disgruntled reporters even posted up the editorial on the editor's office window with their own corrections. The city's main television station, TVB, is widely seen as a mouthpiece for the government. Even its premier English-language newspaper, the South China Morning Post, bought by Alibaba's Jack Ma in 2015, has been criticized for the frequently government-friendly nature of its coverage.

The Stand of the Media

《人民日报》海外版
By Louisa Lim and Maria Sala
July 11, 2019

经过调查发现，除了事件背后的“某些势力”，反对派媒体和西方媒体也在其中扮演了不光彩的角色。他们不断宣扬暴力、反中仇港的论调，煽动香港人进行暴力活动，将香港人置于法律制裁的边缘。

港媒
一个多月来，香港发生了多次严重暴力事件：6月12日，示威者冲进立法会，用雨点、砖块攻击警察；7月14日，示威者闯入立法会，在大楼内肆意打砸；7月14日，在一间商场，示威者用砖块砸断玻璃；7月21日，暴徒在商场中纵火、打砸抢掠，造成多人受伤、财产损失。

在这些事件中，示威者主动与警察发生冲突，警察采取自卫措施，在发出警告无效后，警察再用橡胶子弹、催泪弹进行回击。反对派媒体对暴力事件的报道方法基本一致：他们不断宣扬暴力、反中仇港的论调，煽动香港人进行暴力活动，将香港人置于法律制裁的边缘。只有少数媒体，如《明报》，在报道中保持了一定的客观性。

其实，部分港媒已不甘于“被动”的角色，其本身也是暴力行动的策划者、组织者、参与者。如被称为“港媒”的香港《苹果日报》，其立场亲中、反中、仇港。其老板黎智英在7月被控策划及煽动非法集会、煽惑他人参与非法集会、煽惑他人使用暴力、煽惑他人破坏公共设施等罪名。

The Stand of the Media

外媒
6月12日，香港的小贩活动首次出现暴力行为。BBC网站就此发布了3条新闻，标题分别为《香港抗议行动：警方向抗议者使用催泪弹》、《香港抗议行动：警方向抗议者使用催泪弹》、《香港抗议行动：警方向抗议者使用催泪弹》。而在这3条新闻中，记者完全不提及冲突发生的背景，即示威者冲击立法会大楼，试图闯入才导致警方开枪。据香港警方表示，在6月12日，示威者冲击立法会大楼，试图闯入才导致警方开枪。据香港警方表示，在6月12日，示威者冲击立法会大楼，试图闯入才导致警方开枪。

The Stand of the Media

Concerns over coverage is part of why, when protesters stormed the Legislative Council and vandalized the emblems of power, they argued for a continued occupation. "If we retreat, we will be the 'Sisters' tomorrow," said 25-year-old Brian Leung Kai-ping, the only protester to reveal his identity in his impassioned plea to remain inside the chamber. "They will be filming the destruction and mess in the Legco building and on the streets, and we will be the 'Sisters' tomorrow."

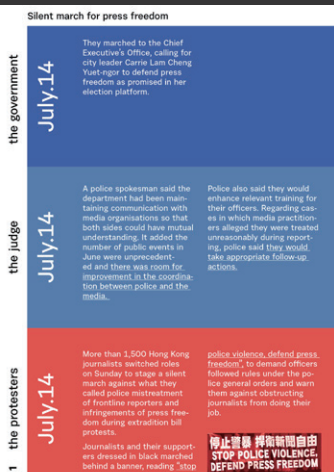
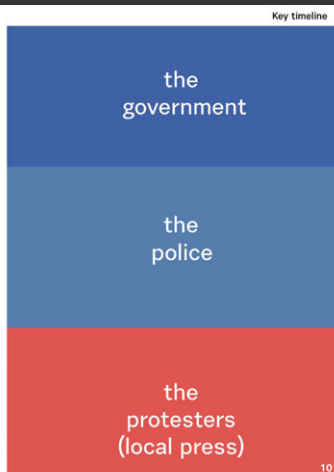


Mainland journalist

《香港 5000 人联署抗议，香港记协称“得到记者支持”》
新华社，2019年8月
针对两名内地记者在香港遭暴力袭击，香港记协（下称：记协）谴责，强调“内地记者未带记者证”，企图为暴徒的过激行为开脱和合理化。

Mainland journalist

对此，上周来香港新闻工作者在网上发起联名声讨行动，批评记协不履行职责，特赦暴徒。截至19日，已有5000名香港新闻工作者在网上联署表态。其中包括的200名新闻工作者。



《大公报》20日的社论，批评香港新闻工作者在网上发起联署谴责记协的联署行动。截至20日，联署行动仅三天之内就已经有超过5000人参与，当中包括约200名新闻工作者。

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THE SUBJECTIVE REALITY

Approval voices

香港特立《反蒙面法》：港府最高监察半年至一年
新浪财经网，2019年10月4日

10月4日下午，香港特别行政区行政长官林郑月娥举行特首记者会，公布《反蒙面法》及其细则。《反蒙面法》将于5日零时生效，违法者最高可判入狱半年至一年。

今年6月以来，香港一些激进分子以“暴力示威”为名，煽动制造暴力事件，无差别攻击打砸抢烧；截至10月，125个港铁站遭到破坏，甚至多个车站的部分设施停用；社会秩序遭到严重破坏，经济预期已降至冰点。暴力分子借蒙面逃避法律制裁，给警方执法造成相当难度。近期时间，香港民间要求立法禁止蒙面的呼吁也越来越多。

据悉，目前加拿大、法国、德国及美国的一些州都制定了禁止蒙面的相关法律，连日来，有数批市民先后来到港府总部请愿，呼吁尽快启动“禁蒙面”立法，禁止蒙面，止暴制乱。

“In the past few days, several groups of citizens have come to the Headquarters of the Hong Kong Government to make a wish, and called for the legislation of the 'Emergency Law' to be carried out as soon as possible to prohibit masking and stop violence.”

the government

the judge

the protesters

Key timeline

18

Anti-Mask Law

the government

Oct.4

Lam enacted the mask ban unilaterally by invoking the EMO - the colonisers law. "Under the anti-mask law, offenders upon conviction could be sentenced to a year in jail and a fine of HK\$25,000."

purpose was to hide their identity and evade the law and they have become more and more daring."

the judge

Nov.18

In November, the Court of First Instance ruled unconstitutional a mask law enacted by the government in October that banned the wearing of face coverings at both lawful and unlawful rallies. The ban aimed to put an end to the increasing level of violence seen during months of protests. They also found the new law had imposed invalid restrictions on fundamental rights and freedoms.

The ruling by justices Anderson Chow Kamming and Geoffrey Lam Wan-he, in favour of the 25 pan-democrats who applied for judicial review, dealt a blow to the beleaguered city government. Police announced they would stop enforcing the ban for now, while prosecutors sought adjournment "to consider the situation".

the protesters

Oct, Nov

Despite the face mask ban, which took effect on Oct.5, anti-government protesters came out in force on the weekend, many donning masks. Protesters often wear gas masks and other face coverings to protect themselves from tear gas fired by police, as well as from being identified.

"At this stage we don't feel any hope," said one demonstrator. "We can't do anything against the police, and obviously the laws no longer work here. But every time I think of the other injured or arrested protesters, we have no right to give up."

Approval voices

激进分子疯狂热黑“反蒙面法”，那是他们政治野心的体现，2019年10月6日

“反蒙面法”的生效，将有助于警方调查取证，预防激进违法行为，更有效地打击暴力分子之手段，也是世界上许多国家在地区冲突中运用的做法。

前阵时候，香港暴力内战升级，被炸区域持续扩大，暴徒在港铁站内纵火并纵火焚烧，制造了极大危害；就在“反蒙面法”生效的前夜，大批乱暴徒还作“最后反扑”，疯狂游街、砸毁暴徒，在全港多处接连爆发激烈冲突。

就在全国人民庆祝新中国成立70周年的喜庆日子里，蒙面暴徒仍以丧心病狂之态，公然寻衅和焚烧国旗，严重破坏香港法治，也严重挑战了“一国两制”原则底线。

正是针对少数示威者借蒙面暴力乱闯的现实，特区政府制订“反蒙面法”，禁止任何人在公众游行集会中穿着蒙面物品阻止警方辨认身份，并不妨碍香港市民依法享有包括游行集会自由在内的各项权利和自由。

“香港不能再乱了。”这是广大香港市民的共同心声，这到香港制订“反蒙面法”，正顺应了主流民意。香港蒙面暴徒绑架市民、滥施暴力，其施暴程度早已超过欧美几乎所有要求禁止蒙面立法适用的范畴。

“Hong Kong can no longer be chaotic” This is the common aspiration of the majority of Hong Kong citizens. This time Hong Kong formulated the "anti-masking law", which is in line with mainstream public opinion.

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Key timeline



“几乎所有进行故意破坏和暴力的抗议者都戴了面具。他们想隐藏身份，逃避法律制裁。我们立法禁止蒙面，是他们的行为与法律相悖。”

Protesters' spokeswoman in Hong Kong after anti-mask law was passed by the government, Oct.4



“林郑行政长官表示，近10周来蒙面示威，没有有效得到遏制和制止。我们作为《紧急法》与《基本法》制定宪法秩序不符。”

Hong Kong's High Court ruled anti-mask law unconstitutional, Nov.17



“我不相信激进分子的示威会停止。当这个国家，我们还没有希望，我们无法对警察采取任何行动，这是法律在遭受挑战。我们接受被裁定的示威权利，但蒙面是他们的权利。”

Hong Kong's Chief Justice after Hong Kong's High Court ruled anti-mask law unconstitutional, Nov.17

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What is the reality you see?

PROJECT RESULTS

IF YOU SEE THROUGH TIMES

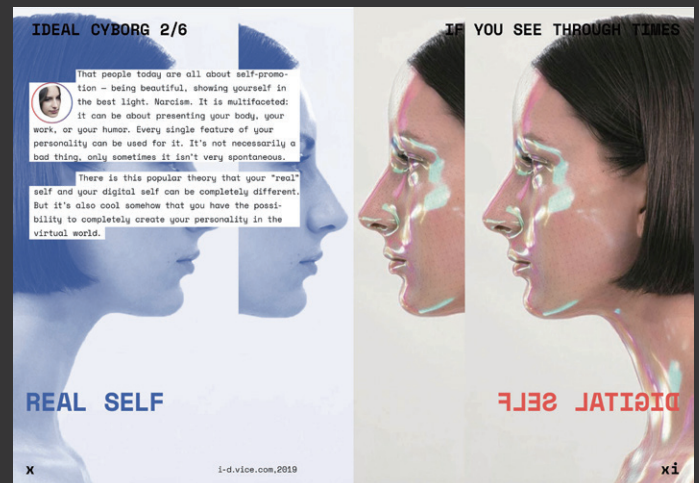
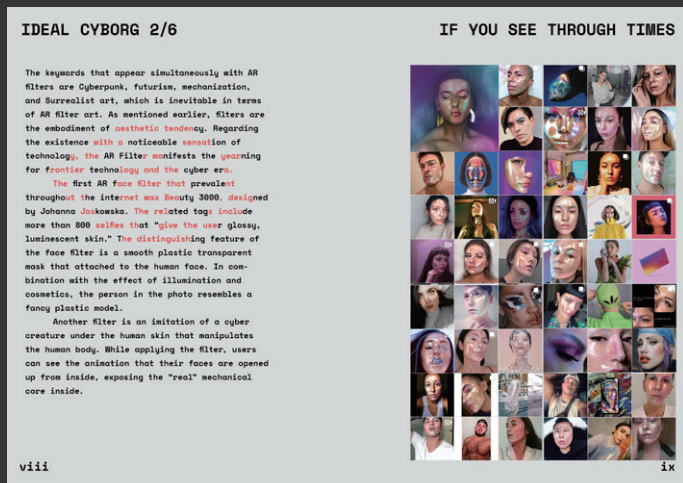
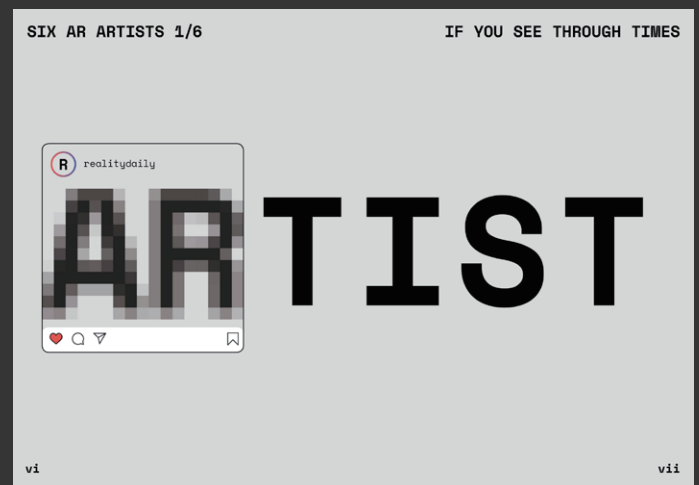
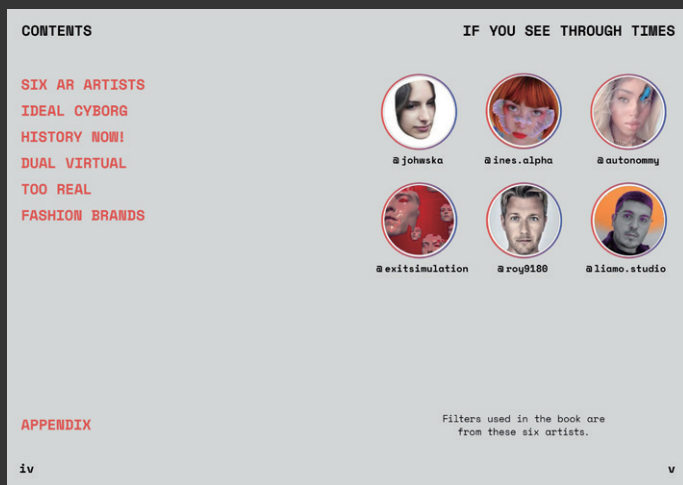
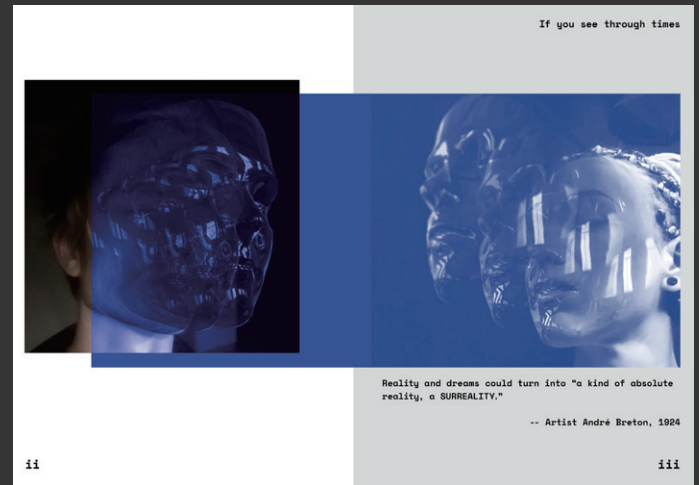
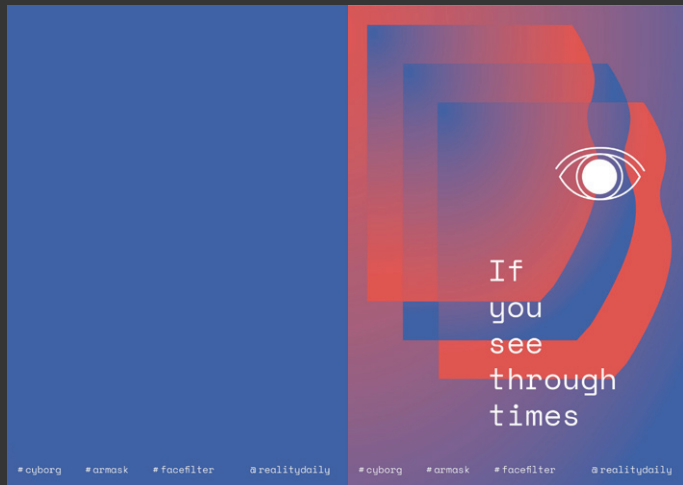
If You See Through Times

The cover design of the book *“If You See Through Times”* (Aesthetics and AR Filters) is inspired by the “Split” filter. This AR filter designer is well versed in extracting data from human faces to produce masks with several separating layers and overlays such as the “Split” filters effect. As a result, the cover illustrates multi-layered and geometric faces. Besides, the red and blue gradient is a representation that implied the real and the illusion of the aesthetics existing simultaneously and contrastingly.

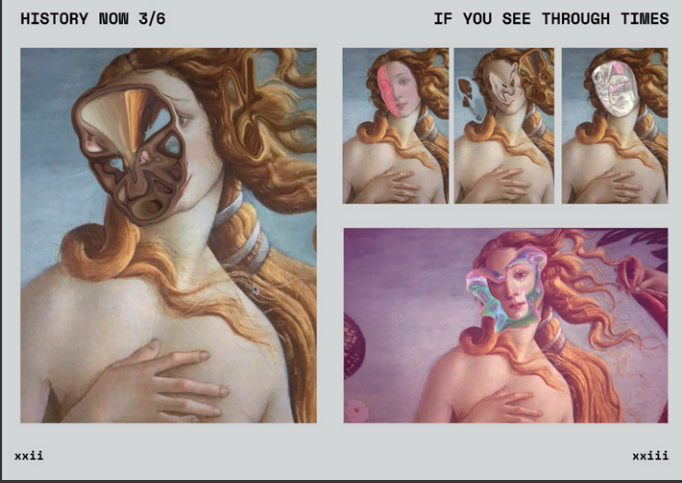
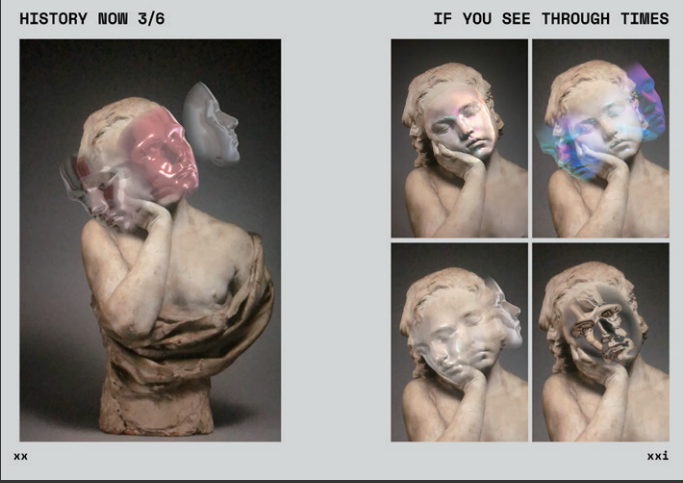
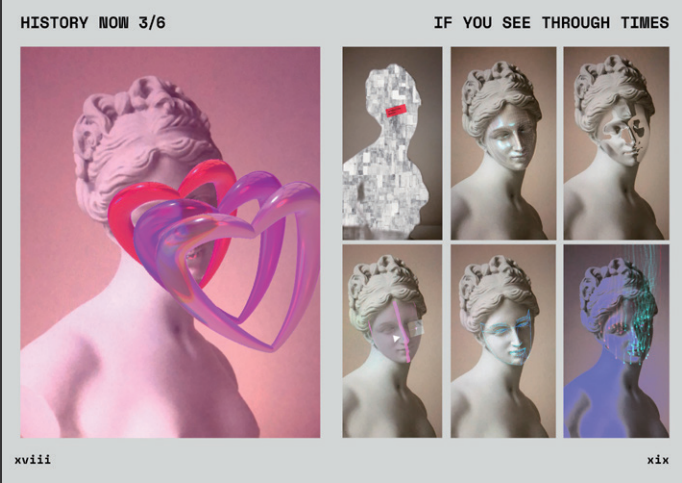
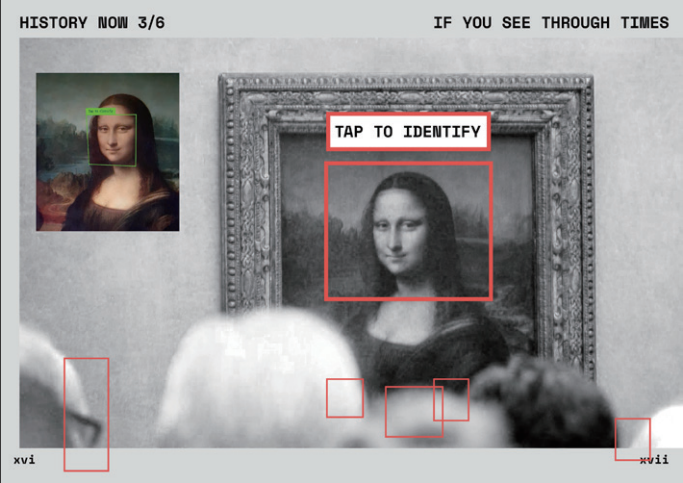
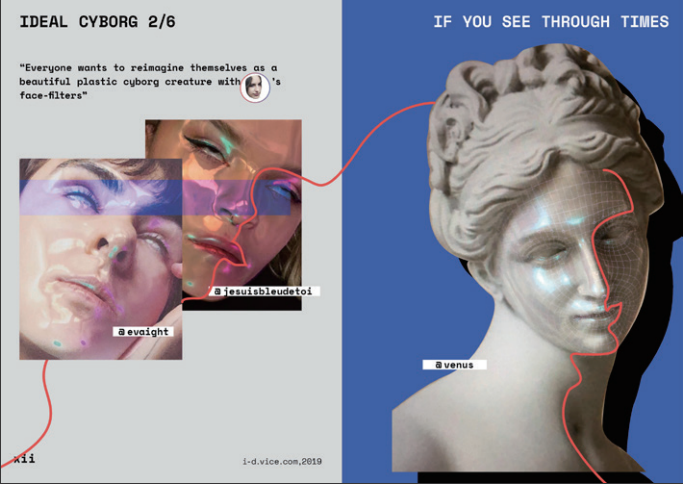
The content proceeds as follows: Ideal Cyborg, History Now, Dual Virtual, Over-Real, and Fashion Brands. As a consequence, the narrative of the book comprises these related stories of the AR filter.

Unlike the typesetting in the book of Hong Kong, there is no distinct conflict between different stakeholders. The controversy that I am eager to convey in this book is a description of uncertainty that swings among “the existence of past,” “the reality of present,” and “the fiction of future.”

THE SUBJECTIVE REALITY



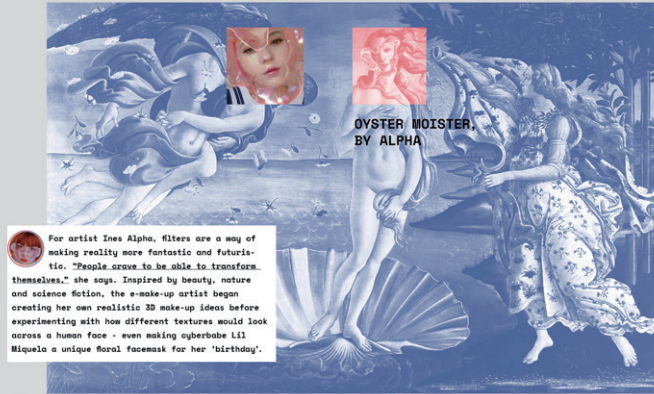
PROJECT RESULTS



THE SUBJECTIVE REALITY

HISTORY NOW 3/6

IF YOU SEE THROUGH TIMES

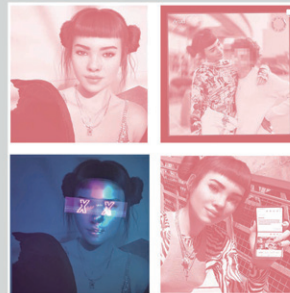


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DUAL VIRTUAL 4/6

IF YOU SEE THROUGH TIMES



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The "cyberbabe" wearing AR filter

In addition to virtual face filters, virtual idols are also sought-after on the internet. A new compound term, "Cyberbabe," is applied to address these virtual idols: at present, Lil Miquela, the most favored fictional CGI supermodel with over 2 million followers, posted her first photo on Instagram in 2016. She has a healthy complexion, a slim figure, adorable freckles, and even a CGI boyfriend.

AR artist Ines Alpha, who is introduced before, has also created AR face filters for her as a birthday gift - a virtual filter created for a virtual character. The dual "virtual" implied the fanaticism of the futuristic aesthetic throughout the network.

TOO REAL 5/6

IF YOU SEE THROUGH TIMES



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www.mic.com



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Filters that mimic the results of plastic surgery have appeared to be on the rise as of late, and include options like Teresa Fogalari's "Plastic" filter or even Siliuh Wusha's "Bad Botox" filter, which has been used 100 million times.

While many users of these filters would likely argue that it's all in good fun, it's possible that these types of filters may be furthering harmful ideas surrounding body image. In extreme cases, these apps could even contribute to body dysmorphia, a disorder where people fixate on "one or more perceived defects or flaws" in their appearance which is typically either perceived by others as a minor issue or not observable at all.

FASHION BRANDS 6/6

IF YOU SEE THROUGH TIMES

Several updates of the Instagram application in recent years have provided brands or merchants with new sections on the profile page, such as Stories (instant self video, up to 60 seconds), IGTV (extended video of excellence, up to one hour) and Shops (online commodity purchase). Statistics determined that 1/3 of the Stories clicked by users are posted by business brands. The Instagram platform affords fashion brands the most influential consumers-the younger generation, and AR filters are the latest fad among the category.

As a consequence, in this virtual world carnival of AR filters, many fashion brands are acting in accordance with the aesthetic evolution and discovering its potential commercial merit. The first to discover business opportunities were cosmetic brands and forefront fashion brands. AR make-up artist Ines Alpha is currently collaborating with some fashion brands to apply her AR productions in the commercial context. The promotional video released by the Spanish niche fashion brand Blanka Y Lola is such a cooperation with Alpha. The brand's own peculiarities are superbly integrated with the fanciful AR filters created by Alpha.

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What is the reality
you see?

PROJECT RESULTS

THE WEBPAGE

“

*what we perceive is not static, but a construct of our senses.
It is our perception that shapes our world. There is not one
single reality.”*

– Anna Püschel, *Layers of Reality*, 2018

To achieve the coordination of the two themes, a prototype of Reality Daily webpage was invented. The webpage is also supportive to construct the Reality Daily brand as a platform to continuously accumulate more issues of subjective reality.

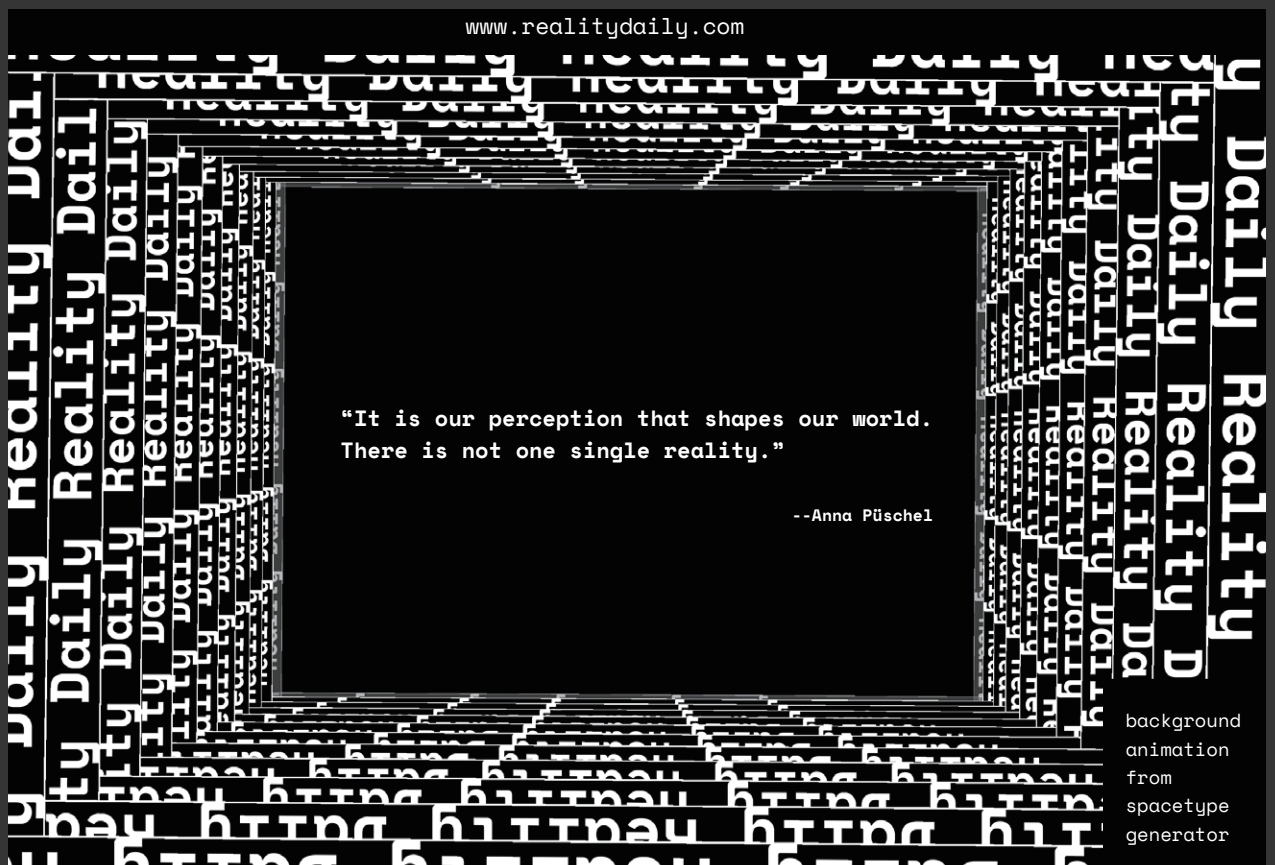
The web page of the fictional independent publishing platform follows the coral red and ultramarine blue of the publication series. The animation in the background is an edition to **the space type generator**, which is an open source generator for kinetic stereoscopic typefaces from Kiel Mutschelknaus.

Each topic floats randomly on a black background in the form of independent tags. Click and open the tag, and comes up the pop-up window. Each theme will break down into two screens concurrently, one on the left and another one on the right, occupying the complete interface. Users can browse them separately or detect the difference between the stories.

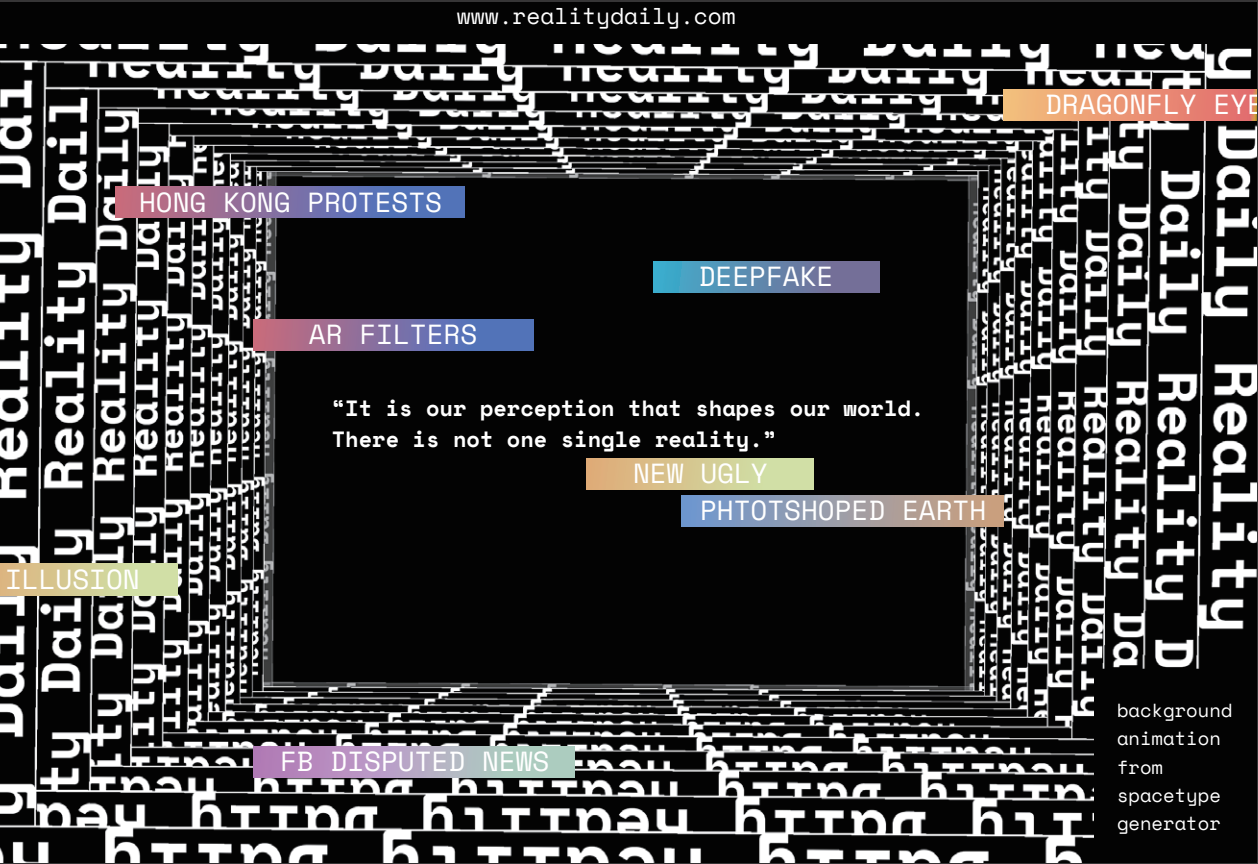
THE SUBJECTIVE REALITY

www.realitydaily.com

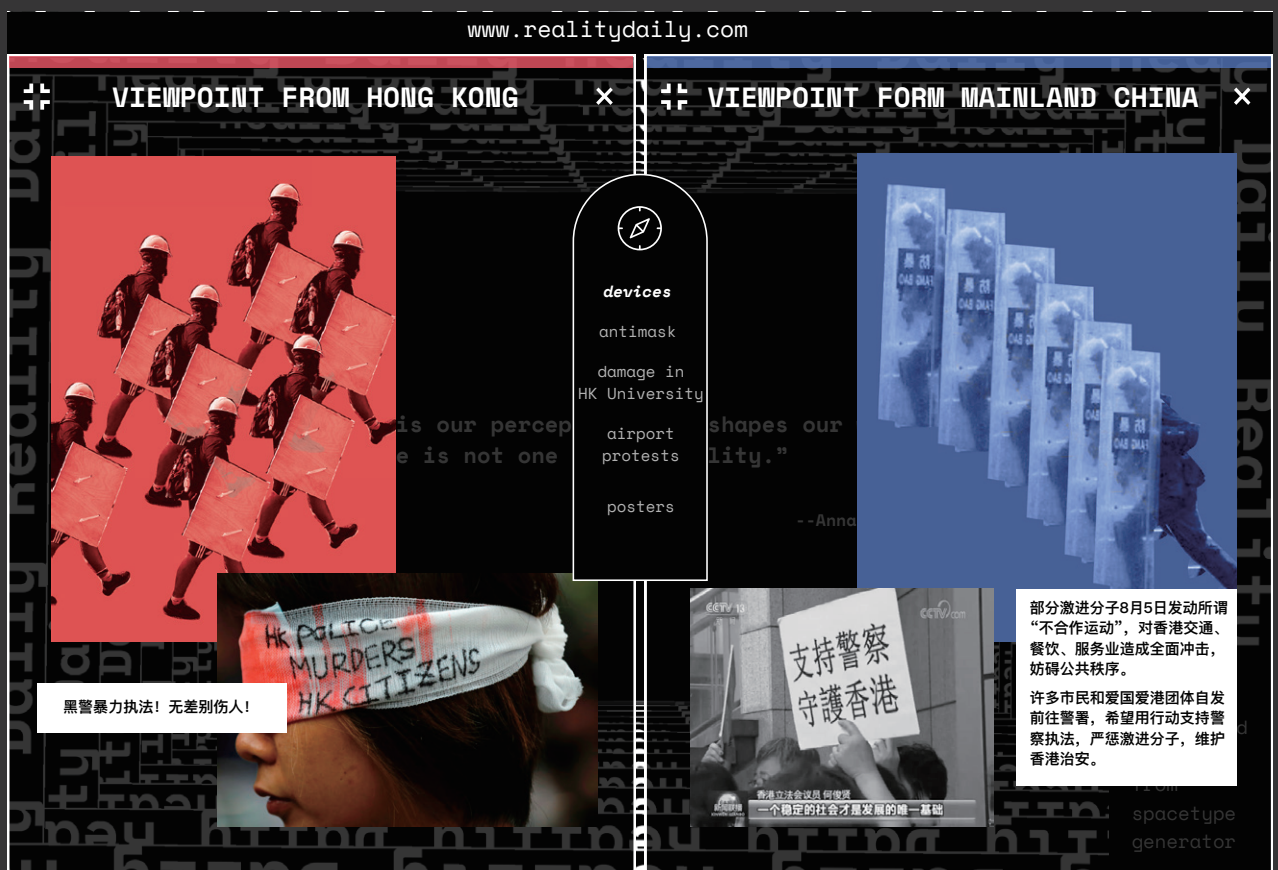
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PROJECT RESULTS



THE SUBJECTIVE REALITY



7

EVALUATION AND INTERVIEW

The design result is not for the designer's own satisfaction. It is not meaningful without valuable feedback from the audience, especially the design for arousing the attention to potential social problems.

The evaluation aims to investigate people's appraisals on both Hong Kong protests and AR filters. A further purpose is to detect whether the outcomes convey the distinct subjective reality in those social issues adequately and to generate some new ideas for improvement. The structure of the evaluation proceeds as "Before," "During," and "After."

7.1 "Before" – the evaluation plan

The evaluation plan comprises five components: the online evaluation probe, the recruiting of interviewees, the selection of the venue, the essential equipment, and a timetable (Figure 7.1).

The recruiting of interviewees

Generally speaking, the evaluation of a book hinges on the physical touching and browsing. Though it was my initial plan, the unexpected circumstances brought by the coronavirus altered the scheme.

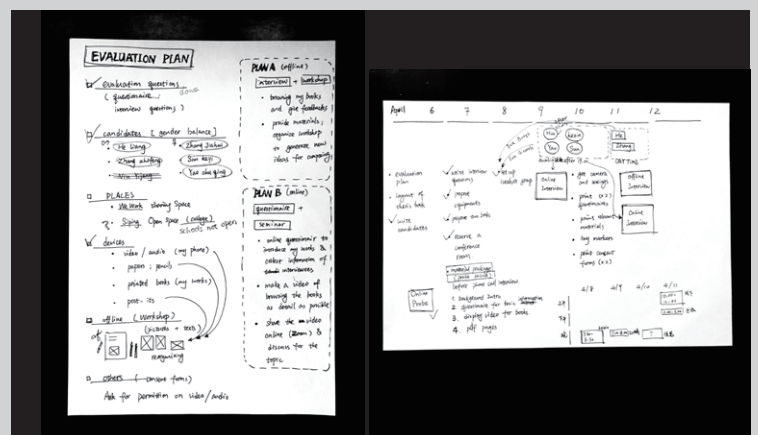


Figure 7.1: the drafts of evaluation plan and schedule

The six volunteers were a bit concerned about the epidemic, and there are four of them required to modify the form of the interview from offline to online. Thus, I determined to organize two offline evaluations and four online meetings. The offline evaluation will provide mostly the feedback from physical browsing and the reading experiences of the book. In contrast, the online assessment will focus more on the opinion towards Hong Kong protests and the AR filter phenomenon.

The online evaluation probe

Despite the impossibility of browsing through the book, an online probe (Figure 7.2) is invented to maximize the subject's experience with the two books. The probe is a zip package consists of a questionnaire, display videos, and some photographs that show a particular manner of reading.

The questionnaire is an elementary setting in the evaluation. For the online probe, it is formulated as an input of the background information for the interview efficiency. The questionnaire possesses an introduction to the project at the beginning. And the questions include the profession, the reading experience of some books with impressive typesetting, and how design could reflect social issues.

The video is a demonstration of browsing the book page by page, intending to expose a holistic perception to the audience. While watching the video, spectators could also grasp, for instance, the double-side structure of the Hong Kong book.



Figure 7.2: the screenshot of the probe essentials, display videos, and pictures

Venue and equipment

Under the epidemic, the college stipulated that students could not return to school in advance. The regulation also limits the use of open space in the school. Thus, I have to reserve the venue for interviews from a co-working company.

7.2 "During" – the process

Online evaluation

The interviewees received the online probe two days before the formal assessment, which was an input of the rudimentary project background. Thanks to the questionnaires and videos, participants seemed quite familiar with the inquiry, and we had a well-ordered conversation.

The average duration of the meeting was approximately 40 minutes. I asked for permission of audio recording each time before the interview. And by the end of the interview, I took a screenshot that contained the name and the time span to document as a process.

Offline evaluation

The offline evaluation is divided into four sections: the introduction of the project, the comprehension of the theme, the browsing of the book, and the final assessment. And the arrangement of the interview atmosphere is introduced in Figure 7.3 and Figure 7.4.

EVALUATION AND INTERVIEW

Figure 7.3: The room before and after arrangement



Figure 7.4: Settings of the environment: a printed questionnaire with pens, recording device – my phone, the printed books, the camera



7.3 "After" – the documentation

There's a supplementary translation for interview scripts on account of the Chinese dialogue between participants and me. In the process of documenting, the sentences with colloquial expressions were tangibly restructured according to their narrative logic.

Meanwhile, the crucial viewpoints were extracted from the scripts and contributed to my subsequent self-assessment. The following pages are three examples of interview documentations.

Interview 01**Duration of interview: 28 minutes****Name: Kexin****Profession: visual communication design****Are there any examples of type setting or book design that impressed you?**

I have seen a design magazine called 360 Design, which consisted of several smaller books with different sizes, the reading experience is very unique.

What is your opinion about using design to reflect social issues (such as speculative design or critical design)? And could you please list some examples that you have seen?

The designers are observing the society, so that the content of the design work will be affected by the social environment to a certain extent. There is a similar example in the form of video. “New shanghaiing” is a series of fiction movies that showed the contemporary society with a perspective from an ancient Chinese, in which the cars and the airplanes are like “beasts” for ancient people.

Have you heard about the Hong Kong protests? How do you feel about the different tendencies of Hong Kong incidents in China and abroad?

There is a news article about some Italian people are supporting Hong Kong for their protesting for democracy and freedom in front of the Milan Cathedral. It astonished me that such a big difference existed between people in a socialist country and a capitalist country. The situation about Taiwan is similar to this incident. Even for now, some foreigners do not consider Taiwan as a part of China in their common sense, but for almost all domestic residents, Taiwan is no doubt a district in China. Sometimes your cognition is based on what the environment is around you.

How do you feel about the culture of filters? What do you think of the aesthetic change in different eras?

Western countries share distinct preference of beauty with China.
I do not like filters personally, but I think that the beauty is diverse



Figure 7.5: The skype screenshot of the audio record with Kexin, the duration of one hour includes also our discussion on her thesis work.

due to different values and the social environment prompts the values.

What do you think about the structure of the two books? Do you feel that it conveys the conflicts and multiple standpoints?

It presents a clearly contrast in the book of Hong Kong, especially the reading sequence from both sides. But it would be better to show that the book has contrasting spreads if you observe the first and the last pages together. And the color is also a strong metaphor of different opinions.

For the book of insagram, I notice it is different logic from another book. I am not sure about the contents of contrast in this book, I personally feel like I am seeing the exhibits of different filter effects.

Do you have any further ideas or suggestions for manifesting the contrast?

Maybe you can print the filter effects on a transparent paper, and the page below is a face from oil painting. It can create a straightforward contrast of “before filter” and “after filter.”

Interview 02**Duration of interview: 44 minutes****Name: Chuqing****Profession: Industrial design, Design Strategy and Theory****Are there any examples of type setting or book design that impressed you?**

A book in a graduation show printed some patterns on a kind of translucent paper, and then the special paper overlapped with the normal paper, which created also the interesting combination of the contents on both paper. Another example is the work from a book binding designer, Zhu yingchun. The two adjacent pages are connected together, and the reader needs to cut it by himself to continue reading.

What is your opinion about using design to reflect social issues (such as speculative design or critical design)? And could you please list some examples that you have seen?

One example is from a new media artist Chen yiyun, her work “Horizontal living” is an experiment of living merely on bed and the outcome is a reconstructed bedroom specially for “Horizontal living.” In my experience, I think that the field such as critical design is still an emerging one in China. It is actually mentioned quite often in the design college, but still not that influential out of the campus.

Have you heard about the Hong Kong protests? How do you feel about the different tendencies of Hong Kong incidents in China and abroad?

Not too much about the incident itself, but I did notice the significant differences on the news bias. For instance, I found that there is a website Radio Free Asia, broadcast Asia-related news but sponsored by American government. Most of their reports are apparently against China. Some public media who are disseminating misleading information due to their political stance are not acceptable, but I don't really feel resentment when Hong Kong dweller holding their posture to defend democracy. It is their position and the cultural factors that causes the conflicts.

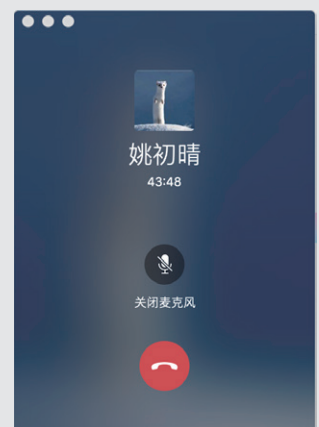


Figure 7.6: The wechat screenshot of the audio record with Chuqing

How do you feel about the culture of filters? What do you think of the aesthetic change in different eras?

I believed that the aesthetics is influenced by two main factors – the consumerist economy and the cultural background. From the perspective of industrial design, the commercial promotions lead to the aesthetics of the product. For example, iPhone sparked off the Minimalist style to the market. Besides, for the reason of cultural background, the Japanese painting genre Ukiyo-e that contains of erotic descriptions was not popular in Japan at first. But it became admired in western culture.

What do you think about the structure of the two books? Do you feel that it conveys the conflicts and multiple standpoints?

I can feel strongly the differentiation of the opinion from the contrasting colors. For the book of Hong Kong incidents, it is interesting to see perspectives from both Hong Kong and mainland China through the double side reading. And the symmetrical layout also prompt the contradictions.

For the book of AR filter, it is a bit confusing about the narrative line, I cannot clearly grasp the logic of the storytelling. What I can feel about the book is a contrast between different eras from oil painting and the futuristic face filters. Actually, since there is no picture shows the appearance before filter effects, the traditional sculpture face with an AR filter looks just like a modern poster as it supposed to be.

Do you have any further ideas or suggestions for manifesting the contrast?

Maybe you can consider using paper with different textures or a combination of printed book with related audio materials to strengthen the cognition of different “reality.”

Interview 03**Duration of interview: minutes****Name: Zhifeng****Profession: Product Design****Are there any examples of typesetting or book design that impressed you?**

Some magazines with the Pop art layout impressed me most.

What is your opinion about using design to reflect social issues (such as speculative design or critical design)? And could you please list some examples that you have seen?

I am not quite familiar with the speculative design, but I have spectated a performance art that expressed the human self-isolation in contemporary society. In the performance, the artist stood in the middle of the site, and there were several excavators around him digging the ground, and gradually the position where he took up and himself became isolated from the outside area.

Have you heard about the Hong Kong protests? How do you feel about the different tendencies of Hong Kong incidents in China and abroad?

Yes, I heard much discussion on the incident. The justification for the conflict, from my point of view, is the incomprehensible mindset between mainland residents and Hong Kong dwellers. Both had different educational and cultural backgrounds, so that the inclination in news articles are inevitable.



Figure 7.7: The interview with Zhifeng; and his reading process.

How do you feel about the culture of filters? What do you think of the aesthetic change in different eras?

People may follow new trends of aesthetics, but when society develops to a certain extent, some retro elements will be re-extracted and become a new wave of fashion. This process might be cyclic.

What do you think about the structure of the two books? Do you feel that it conveys the conflicts and multiple standpoints?

The contrast color is a distinct metaphor of two stances in the Hong Kong book. To be honest, if you show the book without any instructions, I cannot realize intuitively that the book is for double-side reading.

The other book has no such amplified contrast in the pictures I observed. The face from an oil painting with a futuristic mask seems a visual language of pop art.

Do you have any further ideas or suggestions for manifesting the contrast?

As your audiences may not entirely familiar with the AR filters (the Instagram in china is not as prevailing as in western countries), perhaps you can attach more introduction to the AR filter to foster a profound grasp for them.

Another suggestion is that you could try to use the same photo but with filters that favored in different eras. Such a linear approach may show the “past-present-future” contrast you want to express.

8

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Graphic design, in common sense, is the media to articulate designer's observation and stances. It could be a sheer representation of narcissism, which is more identical to artistic composition. Though, more designers are assuming the responsibility of observing and inspecting the society they live in.

The emerging critical design is the inspiration that I draw from the "Speculative Everything," which speculates on the problem-solving methodology of the conventional design. As the contemporary social issues are inclined to be entangled in intercultural communication or sensitive political stances, perhaps what we need in actuality is no longer a solution, but a demonstration to arouse contemplation for the city dwellers.

The focal point of the controversial social matter is predominantly the "truth" or "reality." This led to my investigation of "subjective reality." In the initial stage of the research, the definition and interpretation of "subjective reality" is concluded from several subject fields. The instances from those disciplines answer the first research question, "What is the subjective reality" in the opening chapter. Through the research of the realities in news and aesthetics, the inquiry "What makes 'reality' subjective" is replied. The procedure of exploring the means of graphic expression responds to "How to demonstrate subjective reality in the field of graphic design." Thereby, the thesis substantially attained the initial target.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the design process, the study of media and the exploration of typesetting method prompts a multi-angle illustration of the “reality.” Several drafts and samples were printed out for self-examination and evaluation. It is also an improvement that during the proceeding of dealing with miscellaneous new articles, Instagram photos, and a whole bunch of webpages, the ability to process and translate information into visual language was trained. Besides, the discussion with fellows and the supervisor also enables me to detect unrevealed mistakes and inspiring ideas to proceed.

The evaluation furnished me with a valuable assessment. Both the preparation of the online probe and the offline evaluation was organized within one week. Except for the time limitation, the harsh condition under the epidemic was another challenge for me. I sincerely appreciate my volunteers for their assistance and constructive feedback.

While browsing through all the interview sheets, there are some communal sentiments towards the design project. For instance, for most interviewees, the book of Hong Kong implied intuitive controversy of the stances through the contrasting color and the symmetrical layout. Furthermore, they mentioned that they could grasp the approach of the middle page with a gradient color is to imply the merge of the conflicts. But the manner of exhibiting this book could be improved. The participants also expressed their confusion to the narrative logic of the AR filter book. Not until I explained did they comprehend the meaning of the layout.

For a further plan, I intended to compose a fine-tuning version of both books according to the evaluation results. And the fiction website is demanded to contain more social issues that could reveal the “subjective reality.” This topic can actually cover almost all aspects of society. For instance, the epidemic in Wuhan has triggered discussions about the difference between domestic and foreign manners towards the coronavirus and their various policies to tackle the problem; And the example of the “deepfake” technique that can exchange the face of celebrities, to name but a few. These are all representative of “subjective reality” with several layers of reality. Thus, the fiction independent brand “Reality Daily” could be reinforced as a real independent publication, which takes a critical view of the reality, tolerates the different positions of the real society, and even the “reality” from different eras.

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